Liaalaomir clan on the Glyde River. Here was enacted the great drama 778 of the Rock Python swallowing the two Creator Sisters which has tremendous import in ceremonial and mythological activity.[10] Even the men will not stay on or near this spot at night. The Gunabibi ceremony, although an enactment of this great event, is not conducted here for fear of disturbing the peace of the great father snake, thus causing him once again to come out of his subterranean depths and swallow those who have angered him.

All clan totems are thought to lie below the clan water hole in the subterranean waters. Here too will be found the old mythological ancestors who lived in the time of the activities of the totems on earth [776] in the great mythological days when the world was made and named. When a ranga (higher totemic emblem) has been made by the men of the clan for a ceremony and has been used during the night time, it is put back into the mud of the water hole so that the wongar (spirit of the totem) which is felt to be in the emblem may return to the well.

When a child is born it comes from this well as a spirit. In the well 778 it has the appearance of a very small fish. The spirit comes to the father 842 who is to be, and asks for its mother so that it may be born. The father points out the mother and the spirit child enters her vagina. This 787 happens while the father is dreaming; or when he is out hunting he may notice something peculiar about the actions of an animal or bird which will lead him to the conclusion that his wife is going to have a child.

My informant arrived one morning obviously anxious to talk: 787

I had a nice dream the other night. I dreamed that a boy child walked 842 past all the other humpies [Australian white term for native huts] in the 825 camp and kept coming until he got to my house. He beat on the bark wall. He called out, "Father! Father! Where are you?"

"Here I am."

"Where is mother?"

I told him and wakened up. I thought to myself, "True." Yesterday I went fishing with my wife at the creek. I went up one side of the creek and she went up the other. By and by a bream fish came up and took her hook. He came up to it easily and quietly. My wife did not have to pull on the line, for he came in to her like he wanted to. My mielk [woman] was standing in the water only up to her ankles. He came up to her even though she was in the shallow water. Then he stopped quickly, shook

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[10] See Chapter IX for a detailed description of the myth and ceremonies centered around this totemic well.

That is nothing. That man is far down below in the deep water with his ranga, with his wongar and his old marikmo." 775

The soul of the dead (bir-im-bir) then returns to its totem and the totem lives in the sacred narra well. This is true for both men and women.

A Warumeri clansman was unconscious and near death. The relatives sang the garma sea-way (a cycle of songs about the sea and those totems which are connected with it). While they sang, it was thought, the spirit of marikmo was listening to the song. They then sang crayfish, which is a Warumeri totem. The hand of the dying one moved convulsively like a crayfish. They sang whale, also the clan's totem, and the person dying kicked in imitation of a whale. This meant he was going to die, and he was telling his people. He wanted them to sing his song, it was believed, so that his marikmo and old gatu (father's father's father) would know and come to him. 763 533

The dying one stiffened and was quiet. He was dead according to tribal thought, although his heart beat. "I see that go," one relative said about the heart of the dying man, "and I knew he was dead, but that his marikmo was looking out for him. I could see that because that old man marikmo moved inside his heart. He was taking that spirit back to the Warumeri well." 763

After death and before the burial ceremony, the symbol of the narra well of the deceased is painted on his chest and abdomen—in this instance, the wild duck well. This is done in order that all the dead of the well can see the one who has just died and take him immediately away to his water hole. 764

When, during the Djungguan ceremony for the great snake, Yurlunggur, and during the Narra ceremony for the other totemic emblems, a ranga is made, not only does the totem or the totem's essence enter into it through the singing of the men, but also the birimbir spirits of the dead ancestors—illustrating the close association of the clan members with their totems and dead ancestors. 776 778

The mythological ancestors who are in the well and who had some part in its formation are called old marikmo or old gatu. Their names express clearly the affiliation of the mythical men to the narra well and to the totem.

The names of the wells, as will be seen by examining the list of those belonging to the clans, pages 39-51, show the same totemic affiliation either directly or indirectly. Like the names of the mythological ancestors, they are of two types, the sacred and the camp variety. 778 103

**Marderpa** ←——→ Marungun 614
**Marungun** ←——→ Yalukal, Yandjinung (tribe) 582
**Merango** ←——→ Darlwongo
**Naladaer** ←——→ Daiuror
**Perango** ←——→ Kolpa, Birkili
**Wangurri** ←——→ Kalpu, Maradunggimi, Djirin, Kapin
**Warumeri** ←——→ Kalpu
**Yalukal** ←——→ Marungun

Examining this list of intermarrying clans in connection with the map (page 40), we see that they usually adjoin or are but a short distance apart. When Murngin warfare is discussed later in this chapter, it will be seen that the clans which are in competition for women from [578] another particular clan are usually antagonistic groups and belong to opposing sides in the clan feuds.

A man always calls his own totems bapa (father), marikmo (paternal grandfather), or occasionally old gatu (paternal grandfather's father), according to the relationship term that his father applies to the emblem. If his father calls a totem bapa, ego applies the term marikmo to it; when the father addresses it as older brother, ego calls it bapa. In other words, a man applies the rule of kinship to his relationship with his totem by tracing his relationship to it as though it were an actual relative of his father. Often this nicety is not completely observed, and all the ranga are called by the single term bapa. Ego traces his relationship to totems of another clan through his nearest and most important relative in that clan. He would apply the term mari to a totem if it came from a clan having the mari and marelker line of descent as ego's nearest relatives in it, or he would use the term gawel (mother's brother) or arndi (mother) if the totem came from his mother's group. The members of a clan may all call the same outside clan's totems by different terms, since they may all be in different relationships to the men within these outside groups. The use of this kinship device further articulates ego with the local organization outside his own group, which gives him a greater sense of solidarity. 776 602

Sharing of totems occurs largely with clans belonging to the same moiety and will be discussed under the sections on moiety and phratries.

## Murngin Moieties

Yiritja and Dua are the intertribal names for the moieties of this 616 North Australian culture. All of the eight tribes considered in this paper, except the Burera, refer to their moieties by these names. The same moiety is too keen to be overcome by an appeal to moiety solidarity. 616 578

Various parts of the ceremonies are used to give expression to the dual division. In the Djungguan ceremony, subsections, when calling up their dead ancestors, are placed in the moiety order; that is, first the four Dua subsections and then the four Yiritja take turns in calling the names and the illustrious deeds of their dead ancestors. At the end of this ceremony, when food is eaten ritualistically, the members of the two groups exchange food. During the Gunabibi only Dua men paint themselves, since it is taboo for Yiritja men so to decorate themselves for this particular ceremony. Dua men, however, cannot construct the great Yer-mer-lin-di totemic emblem, and this duty and privilege devolves upon Yiritja men, in exchange for which service the Dua men present the Yiritja men with food and other presents. The Dua use a round grave post to mark their burial spots or when they wish to erect a monument to the spirit of a newly dead person belonging to their moiety, whereas the coastal Yiritja raise a ceremonial mast for their dead. The Dua use red feather decorations for their Narra ceremonies; the Yiritja use opossum fur. 616 796 [437] [764] [301]

The totems themselves are largely divided on the basis of the moiety. The list of the clans with their totems, page 39 ff., will show that most clans of one moiety possess their totems in common. There is a considerable regional variation, but the differences are not due to clan divisions. Very occasionally a clan will possess a totem that no other owns, but this is only a temporary condition, for the myth of the two creator women usually is sufficient proof of ownership to other clans, so that in a short time they accept this new totem as their own, provided they belong to the same moiety as the original clan. For example, on the eastern side of Arnhem Land, along the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, all of the Dua clan have totems such as a yam stick, old woman, and young woman, while the Dua clans in the west, which center around the Goyder River, are more concerned with a snake and a complex of totems which surround it, and less with the women and their totemic objects. There seems to be an historical basis for this division which will be discussed later. 616 776

### The Phratry

There is a weak attempt on the part of the Murngin to form groups of clans within the moiety, based on the mythological idea of a common association with a common creator totem or an alleged similarity 615 197

593 Brothers look to their sisters to supply them with wakus for their
[582 daughters to marry. A waku's importance to a man is no less than
431] that of a son. A brother always makes presents to his sister for her son, as well as to her husband.

[262 A brother, but no sister, may eat a youth's kill of kangaroo, emu,
224] et cetera, until the youth's wife has had a child. A sister is supposed to help carry the ruddled bones of the first kangaroo or emu killed by her brother, just as she helps carry her dead brother's bones.

[551] A brother and father always know and keep the tabooed names of a girl. No woman knows her ceremonial name.

593 There are two sets of behavior in the relationship of a brother and
601 sister that must be treated together (see pages 110-112 for an interpretation of the Wakinu and Mirriri customs). First, she is called wakinu by all her brothers. In its primary sense, wakinu means a person without kin, and secondarily "worthless" or, more expressively, "rubbish."
● [776] Bamapama, the trickster hero, a much-loved scoundrel who lived in the olden days and broke all laws, is always wakinu after some particularly fantastic escapade of his has been retold. Wakinu is used during a fight as an appropriate term against one's enemies. Secondly,
593 no brother can hear his sister sworn at or hear obscene speech in her
195 presence, such as is very common otherwise. Ordinarily, when a man's
831 anger rises, he immediately bursts into an almost pyrotechnical display of abuse, most of it centering around sex, breaking of incest taboos, peculiarities of the genitalia, irregularities in the sexual act between men and women, et cetera. The aversion to hearing or using such profanity in front of a sister is called "mirriri" (ear-thing). It really means, "My ear can't hear obscenity in front of my sister." An older man said, "It is just the same as if I had been hit on the head with a club when I hear that." Another said, "My heart jumps and stops, jumps and stops, when I hear that mirriri."

602 Malambunu had come home and found his food unprepared by his
578 wife, Dangra. A quarrel resulted in which he called her matamakmi
195 (incestuous). She did not swear at him. A near-clan brother of Dangra, Badunga, heard the swearing and became very angry. He gathered a bundle of spears, hooked them one by one to his spear-thrower, and threw them at a large number of the women in the native camp, including Dangra. An investigation showed that every one of the women at whom he threw was called yeppa by him.

Balli, an adolescent girl, called her own mother dalardumaru (big vagina).

While he was high in the sky and had the two women and children inside him he sang all the Marndiella, Djungguan, Gunabibi and Ulmark ceremonies. 773

7. The Dua clan snakes and Yurlunggur discuss what they have eaten and discover they have different languages but the same totemic emblems. They tell their language names, the names of their totemic water holes, and recite the list of their totems, and kinship is established.

The other Wongar Wirtits (totemic pythons) stood up too. They were all Dua, as Yurlunggur was, and none was Yiritja. Yurlunggur was higher than all the rest. He was the leader for those other snakes, and was more powerful than they.[7]

The Wessel Island python (Perango clan) raised himself. "What is your language?" he said.

"I am Liaalaomir. What is yours?"

"I am Perango Yaernungo."

"What is yours?" Yurlunggur then said to the python on the Howard Island mainland.

"I am Liagaomir."

"What is yours?" he asked the Banyan Island python.

"I am Karmalanga language. My country is Kolpaiyunala" [a tree from whose roots fiber string is made].

The Mandelpui, Wawilak, Boun, Djirin, Kalpu, Merango, Djapu, Djawark, and all Dua clans were asked by Yurlunggur what their language was, and each answered the language of his country (see pages 39 to 51).

The Mirrirmina snake said then, "I see we all talk different languages. It would be better if we talked the same tongue. We can't help this now. It is better then that we all have our ceremonies together, for we own the same maraiin[8] [totemic emblems]."

They all sang out together then, and their voices were the thunder and roared all over the land and sea.

The python Wongars still stood on their tails high in the sky. The great Yurlunggur turned to a Daii Dua snake. He said, "What have you been eating?"

"I have been eating fresh-water fish" (Dua variety).

"How did he taste?"

"Oh, he was very good. Nice and fat."

"What are you going to do, now that you have eaten him?"

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[7] There is no doubt that all peoples in the area recognize the leadership of the Liaalaomir python. He is the highest in the sky and the deepest in the well. His clan leaders always lead the Djungguan ceremony when they are present, even if the other clan leaders who ordinarily lead this performance are present.

[8] See glossary of Native Terms.

852 blood is let from several men's arms, and as the fire burns, all the men cover themselves with blood and kangaroo fat.

852 778 *Native Interpretation:*—The palm tree totemic emblem is supposed to be the palm tree "on the outside, but inside it is all the same as a snake."—"That first ranga is called the palm tree ranga because the Yiritja make it, but the inside [sacred] meaning is all the same as the snake. When we stand them up all the Yiritja say, 'they are Wongars all right,' and the leader sings to keep off sickness, for Wongar is inside them and might make us sick."

852 778 776 There is no question but that the Murngin believe the totemic emblems have the totemic spirit inside them, and there is considerable evidence that the totem is believed to take possession of the emblem and move around as a snake does. On one of the nights that yermerlindi totems were first shown, one of the Yiritja men came into my camp and announced to some of the natives and myself that he had gone over to the Yiritja ground where that Wongar snake was, meaning the totemic emblem. He said, "I am afraid of that one. I am small boss for him [younger brother of some of the leaders]. He is close up to the water when he is that way, and maybe he will walk about and kill me and everybody. Yermerlindi always walks about." He meant that when the totemic emblem had been made, sung over, and completed, it was in much the same condition as the totemic spirit is when it lives in the totemic water hole; and with the totemic spirit in the emblem and outside of the water hole, it was dangerous to man. This same man told me of an experience in another Gunabibi ceremony when Yermerlindi was left by himself for a night: Yermerlindi got up and walked around by himself. The discussions among the men during the ceremonies all proved that the statements of this one man are generally believed to be true of ordinary behavior for the yermerlindi emblem. There is ample direct statement from a large number of natives that when the Yiritja men make the totemic emblems for the Gunabibi they sing over them, and this puts power and the totemic spirit in the yermerlindi.

776 781 A night after a Gunabibi ceremony when the yermerlindi was shown, one of the men had the following experience: He couldn't sleep and his sleeplessness continued for some time. Presently he heard the whistle of Muit for him, he said. He raised his head and listened. Muit whistled again. The man listened very carefully to make sure it wasn't something or someone around him, but he heard it again. He

776 laid his head back and went straight to sleep. This story indicates again
781 how sure everyone is that the totemic spirit is about during the time of
the ceremonies which celebrate his power.

## H. The Ceremonial Exchange of Wives

852 1. Distant tribal brothers exchange wives.
786 2. The camp dance of the sexual pair and the exchange of gifts.
3. The night of ceremonial intercourse.

837 1. When the men from distant clans come in to see and participate
in the Gunabibi ceremony, the older men, if they do not know their
kinship to one another, work out their tribal relationships after much
talk; this is mental exercise appreciated by all the more intelligent
Murngin. When a local man discovers that a certain visitor from a far
clan is his tribal brother, he sends his younger brother to inform this
person that he may have the local man's wife for ceremonial copulation
at the end of the Gunabibi ceremony. He sends presents along with
[431] the younger brother. The recipient, either through his own younger
brother or through the messenger, offers his own wife in exchange,
and also sends presents.

This exchange of wives for ceremonial intercourse at the close of the Gunabibi serves as the grand finale of the entire ceremony. As a consequence, it is considered very dangerous and is surrounded with a fairly intricate ritual.

The above is the formal and correct way of exchanging wives for ceremonial purposes, but there are several other methods. Sometimes men agree, without the intermediation of messengers, to exchange their wives. Sometimes a man and woman arrange matters without first gaining the consent of the women's husband; but without the final consent of the woman's spouse, this could not be recognized as legal procedure.

2. After the evening meal, and before the men return to the ceremonial grounds, they sit down in a half-circle around the fire and the
women dance on the other side in front of them. The women and men
[292] wear circlets of fiber string around the head above the ears and across
the forehead to indicate that the exchange arrangement has been made.
While the women dance, various men arise, walk over to the women
[431] and hand them presents of food, red ocher, or some other object of
value. The woman presented with such a gift is the one with whom
arrangments have supposedly been made for ceremonial copulation.

The man who is the wife's partner later privately again gives her

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*Native Interpretation.*—The forked sticks with the pole across are the house of the two women. The ritual of the women who answer the two snakes and beat the ground with their clubs parallels that of the two old women in Section D. The men in the bush are the snake. The boys who are hanging from the rafter are flying foxes. When the women move back and the men sit down in a line under the rafter, "This means one people, and the rafter is the snake and the people are Muit food.—They are all the same as the birimbir of Bapa himself. —They are Muit and they are one people." When the boys crawl from behind the line of men to one end of the line, they are brought to the tail of Muit and "They are the young snakes of that big one." When the boys crawl up to the head of the snake and receive the food from the head (the Yiritja snake sitting on the forked pole), "This means the children all want food [the children of the snake] and the snake spews out the two women and they [the children] eat it [the two women] and give it back to him [spit out the food again]."

All the above was told to me by the leaders of the Gunabibi, both during the actual portrayal of the ceremony itself and in conversations during the hours of rest between the morning and evening dances.

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The significance of the flying fox to the Murngin is that he is a mokoi or trickster spirit of the dead who lives in the bush. He is a generally recognized symbol to all of the spirit that does not go into the water hole but goes out into the bush or the jungle or to the Morning Star Island at time of death (see Barnumbir myth, page 524). —"A flying fox is all the same as the dead spirit from the bush. It is Dua."[18]

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### J. Ceremonial Purification

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1. The men and women paint themselves with red ocher and kangaroo fat. The neophytes are brushed with smoking ironwood branches.

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[18] When an uncircumcised child dies, its mother has the wings of a flying fox painted on her shoulders and the body of the fox painted on her abdomen. "This flying fox is the birimbir spirit of that dead baby. This is done for both Yiritja and Dua mothers and babies." The same painting is sometimes put on a woman when she has had her first menses. The woman is placed inside a hut and, when she wants to move, is given two yam sticks with which to turn over. The yam-stick movement is ceremenial and symbolic of the movement of the two old women who walked with the aid of a yam stick in each hand.

[783]
The condition of the boys, or women who are menstruating, of the mother of a dead child, etc., is said to be djo-ak, which means ritually unclean. "If a mother or mari or yeppa sleeps close to dead baby that sweat comes out and makes the mother unclean. Women put red ocher on after this. No one can take food from these women until the bones are dug up and she is painted by her husband with flying fox."

852 773 and interpreted in the ritual, with heavy emphasis on the profanemen of the pool by the women's menstruation blood and their being swallowed by the python. The ritual power of blood is demonstrated. Th last dances on the men's ground (F) symbolize the snake swallowin the women, as in the fourth section above, and some of the plants an animals collected and named by the women run away from them int the Mirrirmina well. Some of the dances also bring in the mino theme of the moiety ceremonial antagonism, Dua animals pretending to fight Yiritja. The circumcision (G) has the snake-swallowing-the-women element, and is the fulfillment of the first section above, in which the boys are told the snake is calling for their foreskins.

The last section (H) is the one in which the initiates are finally purified and, by taking the communion of food (the sacred names of the various morsels of which they have been told), are finally made a part of the male group.

In brief, all the sections of the Djungguan except the last dramatize primarily the myth symbol of the snake swallowing the women.

*Gunabibi*

776 The mythological python in the Gunabibi ceremony is known as Muit. Muit is supposed to be more powerful than Yurlunggur. The old men say he is more powerful because his ceremony is greater. Muit is sometimes looked upon as the father of Yurlunggur, as the inner spirit of Yurlunggur. Generally the two are interchangeable. Most people say they are the same, though a strict Murngin philosopher, when giving the subject careful consideration, differentiates between the two pythons by associating Yurlunggur with the Djungguan rites and Muit with the Gunabibi and Ulmark.

852 773 The first section (A) is merely the preparation of the symbols for the two elements found in opposition throughout the myth: Mandelprindi, or the snake; and the boys and dancers who are the two women. The ritual of this section is part of the general snake-swallowing-the-women symbol. In the second section (B), Mandelprindi calls, the women answer, and the initiates are taken—i.e., the snake has taken them. The third section (C) again—in the whirling of Mandelprindi, the singing of the men and the reply of the women—symbolizes the swallowing. The dance sequence here offers another major symbol—that of reproduction and fertility and the cycle of the seasons. In the fourth section (D), the line of men who surround the women symbolizes the swallowing of the two Wawilak women. The rituals while

821 clouds are Dua and those lines of clouds that come from the west ar
805 Dua.

"The north wind blows and the weather can be wet or dry. It i Yiritja. This is also the time of the wind from the south. When black clouds appear [on the horizon] and Yiritja lightning comes from them, it is when the crocodile makes his nest and lays his eggs and the sting ray appears. It is Yiritja time now."

When the inland lakes dry up and the small streams disappear and many of the clan water holes are empty, "the thunder comes then and calls out for the rain." This is Raet-un-daer, the intermediate period between the dry season and the wet. The clouds from which thunder comes are called kur-ka (penis or male) mo-la-ma (cloud); they come from the south and east. A little later gur-ding gur-ding (the "woman cloud") comes from the west. "Those two meet and copulate." When this happens the "Snakes on the ground ["tucker ones"] put their tails together and copulate. Great mobs of the snakes do this."

"The inside meaning of those clouds is all the same as the snakes. They are snakes."

"The rainbow comes then [bar-i-el-la, light; ba-pi, snake]." [4]

821 The rainbow is sometimes seen as the python totem itself, at other
776 times it is the house of the snake, and at still others the totemic trumpet. Since it is believed that when the Yurlunggur trumpet is made for the circumcision initiation the snake is inside, it follows that if the rainbow is the snake's house it is also the trumpet. "That one is a snake, he is also the snake's house. Bariella shows all the people that they have to get their houses ready, and when we see this each one starts making his house."

It was because the Wawilak men, who came after the snake had swallowed the women, saw the rainbow in the Mirrirmina pool that they knew the snake was inside the water hole. To the Murngin the rainbow is an announcement not only of heavy rains but also of the heavy floods at the height of the rainy season.

The rain is believed to be Yurlunggur himself or his saliva, with which he licked his two Wawilak victims and their children before he swallowed them. "The rain," said one of the leaders of the Liaalaomir clan, "is all the same as Muit's spit, or he can send it by his voice [thunder]. He can tell it to come." The oldest leader of the Liaalaomir clan, Dorng [thunder], said, "That big fellow, Bapa Indi, he is our father. Down here we call him Wirtit [common name for the ordinary rock python]. Bapa Indi makes the rain. Rain is all the same as our brother." 821 776

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[4] Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., *The Rainbow Serpent Myth of Australia.*

Snails and caterpillars are classed as snakes by the Murngin and, although I did not attempt to get an explicit statement on certain types of grubs, I believe they are also placed in this same category; at least they are always associated with snakes. "Snail is all the same as snake. He comes out just before the rainy season. The inside meaning for that snail is the wet season." Modern Murngin women start hunting snails for food with their marl-pin-pin (snail) sticks at this time of the year. 821 825

There are two kinds of lightning. One, ordinary heat lightning, is supposed to be Yiritja; a native compared it to the light from my flashlight because it spread out and diffused evenly. Forked lightning that comes with the roar of thunder is Dua. Yurlunggur's voice is his warro (soul, shadow, or reflection). He said to these two Wawilak women, "People by and by will call my warro, bapi [snake]. When that lightning comes it is all the same as daylight, and thunder sings out in a heavy roar. Dua lightning is the forked tongue of the snake, and the thunder is the roar of the snake. That storm [see myth] and thunder were from that snake, and he was after those two Wawilak women—those two women tried to stop that snake's tongue. He wanted to swallow them. Those Dua rain clouds [see myth] bring rain. Those two women tried to stop that rain because the water came like a flood and tried to cover them all up. That is all the same as that snake swallowing them. The women tried to stop the snake because he was the flood and the wet season covering the earth." 821 776

The Great Python, Yurlunggur or Muit, is sometimes seen as the rain itself but is usually associated with or considered identical with the flood. The flood referred to in their thinking is either the great inundation that covered the earth as told in the Wawilak myth or those that come yearly.

Generally Yurlunggur is associated with the totality of the wet season. He is recognized as such by the clansmen of both moieties over the entire area. The degree of a person's philosophical and theological insight into his meanings depends largely on the individual and his social personality. An intelligent, alert Murngin will know most of the evidence recorded here in the native statements. On the other hand, a stupid one would know a few of them and understand the generalities. Muit or Yurlunggur is man and woman, but he is thought of as male. The splitting of the python into two sexual parts, a male

821 individual and a female, is made when the totems are put into the category of natural phenomena; and since it is the nature of snakes
776 on earth to be male and female and have young as man and all other creatures do, it is obvious to the Murngin that the totemic snakes are the same as any species. One of the clan leaders said to me, "The children are little Muits. They live here on the earth or with their father in the sky or with him in the waters down below the earth. Their children are true wirtits [actual snakes—thus the connection between the snake species and the snake totem is complete]. It is the little Muits who swallow a man or woman when they do some unclean thing such as a woman's getting into a canoe while menstruating. It is Muit who makes the rain." This account I think is less generally expressed and believed among the larger group because it is too well rationalized and bears the mark of a ritual leader and more intelligent person; yet it would be accepted by any Murngin if it were expressed to him by a leader.

821 The following would be generally known and was told to me
776 numerous times during ceremonies or when the weather was being discussed: "The wet and dry seasons are caused by the snakes. During
825 the wet the snakes curl up and have sexual intercourse; the Great Father Snake does the same. They then come out of the water and want to lay their eggs. This brings on the dry season so that they can have such a place. By and by this causes the heavy floods of the wet season."

821 It is believed that if, through any ritually impure act, the Wongar totem snake should be angered, he would come out and swallow the
776 earth, and a flood would come at the same time. Several men said to
773 me in effect what I now quote from one man: "If any Wongar snake would swallow us now the flood water would come like it did for the Wawilak sisters and cover all this land.—That snake brought the flood and the rain at the same time when he pushed the stone out of the bottom of the Mirrirmina well." Another time I was told, "When that snake took the stone from the bottom of the well the water came and the snake at the same time. He blew up to the sky for rain." Some versions say he spit water from Mirrirmina, and others say, "He spit at the same time he blew his breath."

At a moment in the Ulmark the leader said to me, "Those Wawilak women sang all night to stop Muit and stop the rain and water. They are all the same thing."

Lightning "is all the same as my brother," a Dua man said to me.

"When the lightning comes that means a light for Wongar [the 821
totemic spirit] to see by when he makes that big noise [the thunder] 776
and hits down at those people he fought [the Wawilak sisters in the
myth]. When rainbow time comes that is the snake Wongar. He is 773
swallowing those two women. When I see a rainbow or lightning I
understand rain is coming."

The cycle of the seasons with the growth and decay of vegetation, 821
copulation, birth and death of animals as well as man, is all the
fault of those two Wawilak sisters. "If they hadn't done wrong in their 773
own country and copulated with Dua Wongar men [an incestuous 776
act] and then come down to the Liaalaomir country and menstruated 812
and made that snake wild [angry]," this cycle would never have
occurred. "Everyone and all the plants and animals would have walked about by themselves." There would have been no copulation between the sexes and no children and no change. "After they had done this wrong they made it the law for everyone." One of the most intelligent men said to me, "Black men walk about single and by and by catch a mate belong him and by and by yoto [children]. White man walk about by himself, by and by catch mielk and more yoto come out. Macassar man was all the same. Big kangaroo walk about single, by and by he catch a woman and by and by yoto. All the same for opossum and fly and bandicoot and everything."

"Snake catchum mate and by and by egg and yoto. All the same for lizard and native companion and bee and turtle and everything.

"Black men cut down trees and by and by little ones come up. Everything is the same everywhere. Walk about single, by and by mate and by and by pickaninny."

This was told me during a Gunabibi as well as other times. It is almost, as far as I could see, a formula in the thinking of the Murngin.

Most of the quotations that have been given were obtained while I observed the Djungguan or Gunabibi and was being told by its leaders the "inside" meaning of each part according to Murngin thought.

The statements of the natives in these last few pages clearly indi- 821
cate that they are conscious of the symbolism by which they associate 825
the rainy season with the snake or with his actions. The snake at
this time comes out of the streams, the lakes, the springs, rivers and 773
wells, which are the sacred totem wells of the Murngin, and as he 776
raises himself the flood rises and the rain starts. He is both in the
heavens (the thunder is his voice and the lightning his tongue; the
clouds copulate and they are the snakes) and in the subterranean

821 depths. When the snake rises and swallows the women the waters o
825 the earth cover the dry land, and the snake does not fall until th
773 southeastern monsoon blows. He falls and the earth is dry agai
●776 "He was looking for dry land to put [regurgitate] them on." Th
rain stops, the waters recede, and the earth dries while the southeastern monsoon blows. In the myth, then, its blowing is the comin of the dry season. The snake falls and regurgitates what he has eaten as do the other snakes. The period of want when little food is available is over, for the wet season has "spit up" what it has swallowed i its waters. The women and the other animals swallowed are in this symbolism. The reproductive and "food-giving" parts of nature are by inference—but not, so far as I could determine, in the consciousness o the Murngin—the dry season. The great primeval flood is merely a dramatic enlargement of what takes place every year when the torrential tropical rains flood the lands, cover the earth, and bring want where there was plenty.

## The Wawilak Myth and Ritual and Murngin Social Organization

821 The "swallowing" of the earth by the rainy season is known to be
825 caused by the wrong actions of the two Wawilak women in copulating
773 incestuously with their own clansmen and by the older sister's later
852 profaning the pool of the sacred python. This is not considered an unmixed calamity, however, because the rain and water bring the plants and bulbs and flowers which are consumed directly by man or provide pasturage for kangaroo, opossum, and other animals eaten by man. In other words, the Murngin see the snake's swallowing the women and animals as necessary and part of the scheme of things, and their testimony clearly demonstrates the causal relation between the actions of the Wawilak women and the seasonal cycle. The cycle of nature is a necessary one, in which man has ordinary and extraordinary rôles to play. In the ordinary rôle he "walks about single, by and by mielk, by and by yoto," as do all the other animals; and in the extraordinary rôle he is pledged by the Wawilak women to continue producing the great rituals because of their original sins and to purify man and his society. These ceremonies are designed to aid nature, or possibly it would be better to say to restrain man from preventing by his unclean actions the coming of the dry season of plenitude. This is why the young man who refuses to copulate with the woman in the fertility rite of the Gunabibi is scolded and told that he will be sick and make his partner ill. And this is why the whole

177 for the Malay in the native cosmic ideology, just as the myths have been
773 added to in order to account for the white man and his civilization; but all these changes are purely superficial and but additional facts seeded into native cosmologies.

177 At the end of their visits in Australia the Malays always lifted their
764 masts, which had been taken down, and fastened them securely to the decks as part of their final preparation for departure. It is possible that there was a slight ceremony involved in this. The Murngin have taken the activities that surrounded the raising of the mast and transplanted them as a ritual into part of their burial ceremony. This has not been done by all of the clans, but is confined to only a few of the groups of the Yiritja moiety. The lifting of the mast by the Malays meant to the Murngin that they were leaving for that year, and, in a way, it symbolized their farewell to Australia in the minds of the Murngin. The idea of the departure of the Malay ship has been transferred to the idea of the departure of the soul of the dead.

The corpse is lifted in the same way as Malays were supposed to have raised their mast, and the natives chant a pidgin variety of Malay which seems to be a version of Malay chanting. When the body is raised from the ground to be taken to the grave, two men say a Malay prayer over it.—The prayer is supposed to mean, according to my native informants, that they are asking for a safe journey for the soul, that no trouble will come to it, just as the Malay, in his prayer, asked for a safe voyage for his ship. This prayer was said by the Malays, according to native ideas, during a storm and before they left for their homelands.—The natives then dance a ceremonial pulling-up of the anchor while taking the body to the grave. A mast is raised over the grave as a memorial.

All this is of particular interest to the student of symbolism and ritual, since it clearly demonstrates some of the methods by which abstract ideas are put into concrete form and the various elements of culture integrated into a single unity in the minds of the people and in their group actions.

177 Some of the coastal clans have added articles of Malay material culture
776 to their list of multiple totems. Each clan has a large number of totems which are ranked according to their emotional mythological importance. The Malay totems usually belong to the garma class, which is the lowest and can be seen by women. This is not so much the direct influence of Malay culture as the inclusion of new facts into Murngin classifications. The whole of their world (animal, plant, mineral, cultural, et cetera), has been symbolized into a totemic system. It would be strange indeed if the culture did not find a place for the Malay and the contents of his culture. At present there is a tendency to substitute the white man and his civilization for the Malay in the totemic system.

144 *Malay Influence on the Racial Stock.*—It is surprising to the investigator

X773 When the clouds finish and the rainbow comes out it sits down on that
825 island. That rainbow is all the same that snake. It goes inside that well.
821 We know then that some woman has been eating that snake. When we see in the Warumeri and Wangurri country a little cloud come up over that island we understand that that snake has blown and made that cloud and we are very near the rainy season again.

## ALL-FATHER STORY

X773 All black men have a Great Father up there in the sky who belongs to
both Dua and Yiritja. His power names are Mang-o-lu, Dur-rung-na, and
776 Li-li-pi-i-na. He looks like an ordinary man but he is much bigger. He is the head man of both Dua and Yiritja. Some men say he belongs only to Dua, but no one says he belongs to Yiritja.

Everything everywhere, fish, iguana, kangaroo, opossum, when he eats them he puts the bones in a pile and does not let them drop down to earth. If a fish bone dropped down it would make plenty of fish, or if a kangaroo bone dropped down it would make many kangaroos. In fact, any animal's bone that fell to earth would multiply its species.

Mangolu infrequently is said to be the father of the children of the two Wawilak sisters, but he was not the father of the Wawilaks. The father of the two creator women lived somewhere in the Nullikin tribe's country. His name was Wa-mo-lung-u (stone spear) and Bur-pa-lo-ma (stone-headed spear). This is the country where many of the flint quarries are found and which supplies much of the material for the stone spears of the Murngin.

## FLYING FOX AND CIRCUMCISION

X773 Two flying foxes were sitting down resting. One was the Dua kind who has a little touch of white on his wings. The other was Yiritja, for he was black all over. The black one said, "Let's circumcise each other."

The two then danced Marndiella. After they had finished it, each cut the other. They started crying out for the first time and their cry was the noise that flying foxes make in the trees when they are hunting for fruit in the night time. They said when they did this, "We'll cut ourselves so that people will always do like this."

Black men think like this today. First came the flying fox Wongar, then the Wongar yolno (men), then our old marikmo-bapa line (present-day man).

## FLYING FOX AND DOG

In Wongar days Flying Fox could not talk. Dog could speak. Dog was the leader for Flying Fox. He said to Flying Fox, "What is the matter that you don't talk?"

Flying Fox could say nothing. Dog put his paw under his arm and

Emu. It was because they fought that Jabiru stayed by the sea and Emu 773X
went into the bush.

### BAMAPAMA, TRICKSTER HERO

Bamapama is the trickster hero of the Murngin. He was a man who lived 776 ●
in the mythological period and committed a great number of asocial acts, 773X
most of them incestuous. He is depicted as ever filled with sexual desire and always anxious to satisfy it by attacking the wives of other men, particularly those women who belong to his own moiety. He is a somewhat stupid fellow, rather gay, and is usually attempting some trick by which he can satisfy his inordinate lust.

Any attempt to get at a deeper understanding of his place in Murngin culture must consider not only the general content of the stories about him, which follow, but also the effect on the Murngin to whom they are told, the other uses to which the myths are put besides mere story-telling, and at times the reasons why they are told.

The Murngin think of Bamapama as a "crazy man" and one who 828
breaks all tribal laws and cannot be disciplined. A man who is "crazy"
and a young man who cannot be disciplined are classed as one and the 626
same. A man of this kind (often called wakinu and "all the same as Bamapama") is usually killed by his own people, or they take him to another country and have some of their enemies kill him. Although an insane person and an asocial person are classed under the same term, there is a distinction made in the behavior of the people toward them, for an insane man is given special treatment and is protected and guarded by all his people.

The Bamapama stories are correlated with the clan local organization. 773X
Some of the themes of this cycle are enacted in ritual (see the Marunga
clan garma ceremony, pages 564-565). The Bamapama stories, as well as the 776
mother-in-law story (see page 562) function as negative sanctions in the 182
enforcement of clan and moiety laws surrounding sexual discipline, par- 626
ticularly that of incest. The stories always elicit gales of laughter and make
the trickster a figure of derision; at the same time he is liked as an amusing 522
fellow. He has something of the fascination of the devil in our own society, although it must be clearly understood that the native trickster is not morally as well developed as is our own trickster. Bamapama is a symbol of asocial behavior since he not only breaks the laws of exogamy but acts "like a crazy fellow." When he eats charcoal and "runs around like a dog," when he fights with dogs instead of human beings, the laughter in a group of listeners aroused by his escapades seems to act as a release for the repression of asocial desires in the minds of the people. The Bamapama stories constrain the individual from committing similar acts by his consciousness of the group's disapproval of such behavior and by a disapproval of himself should he even conceive of himself in a similar situation.

626 182 776 522 Ridicule and laughter are two strong sanctions for the enforcement of discipline in Murngin society. The speaker is usually, but not always, an older man who knows the stories, and the audience is composed ordinarily of younger men. The actions of Bamapama are always asocial. The laughter at his actions seems to serve two purposes. In the first place, it holds such actions as his up to ridicule and scorn and identifies anyone who does such things as being in the same category and worthy of the same scornful laughter; at the same time the various social pressures which are bearing against the individuals of the community to force their obedience to the restricted sexual codes are vicariously evaded and the deeper asocial yearnings expressed by the enjoyment of Bamapama's exploits. It seems possible that Bamapama, the trickster hero, is a creation of the vicarious satisfaction of the Murngin males' inhibited incestuous desires and further serves a positively useful function in bringing ridicule on these same collective individual desires and preventing their direct satisfaction. It can easily be seen that the women also appreciate these stories and likewise derive a vicarious satisfaction out of listening to them.

776 Bamapama is present in the various areas under a number of names, but under all of them he is recognized as Bamapama himself. He was supposed to have lived in the pre-human period, although some of the stories are told about his actions in relation to modern clanspeople.

## BAMAPAMA AND GURRONG

X113 That very crazy fellow's name is Bamapama. He is a true bushman. It was in the days of Wongar, in the country of the Burilung clan. All the young girls of the people were sitting down in a line. This man Bamapama went over where they were and looked at them. He looked and looked at these girls. He called them Gurrong. They called him Marelker.

He said to these girls, "You run along here. I want to look at you." They ran and ran, and then came back. He made each one of them jump over a stick as she ran. He wanted the girls to jump over this stick to see how they would look, for there were too many of them together to tell what each looked like. As each one jumped over he said, "That's no good."

The girls were young and had firm, well-developed breasts. As each jumped over it he scratched his head. Finally he asked them all to run once more, so that he could look at them again.

There was one girl he liked the most. He selected her from the rest and rubbed her back and breasts with his hands. He said to her, "Gurrong, I want you to come with me to this pool where we will catch some fish." He said, "You go ahead and I'll come behind."

He was lying to her. He came by a tree, the bark of which is used to poison fish, and scratched off some of the bark. He put it in the water and poisoned the fish. The fish died and came to the top of the water. Bamapama and his gurrong caught several of them. They put them on the bank once the camp of *Djunkgao* and his sister. The aborigines pointed out that, because *Djunkgao* and *Madalait* were brother and sister, their camps were some distance apart. 773* 532*

At *a* is the lizard *tjunda* resting under one of the *murinja* (casuarina) trees created by *Djunkgao*. The groups of parallel lines on either side of the lizard indicate again the lines of soft sand which ran from under its feet as it walked along the crest of the sand-hill.

Plate 86C is more or less a duplicate of Pl. 85F. It is included because of the attractive design and fine brush work. The meanings are similar, the upper panel representing the sunrise, the lower right the parallel sand-hills, and the lower left the lizard, *tjunda*, at Jelangbara.

### *Djunkgao and the Lizard, Tjunda*

Plate 85B pictures the lizard, *tjunda*, associated with *Djunkgao*, at a *dua* totemic place at Arnhem Bay. The painting is figured because it is an example of how the different language groups illustrate similar subjects. The language group, or *mata*, of Port Bradshaw pictures the running sand design on either side of the lizard, *tjunda*,[37] while the members of the *kapin mata* of Arnhem Bay modify the design by replacing the running sand design with that of the leaves of the *darra* palm leaf.[38] The tracks are those of the swamp-bird, *buota*.[39]

### *Djunkgao and Madalait at Arnhem Bay*

When *Djunkgao* and *Madalait* reached Arnhem Bay, *Djunkgao* pushed his digging sticks into the ground and created many fresh-water springs. When the water started to rise *Djunkgao* told his sister that the wells would be sacred and that she would be in charge.

Plate 87C pictures the open plain and swamp country near Arnhem Bay, [133] some of which is periodically covered by the sea. The small circles at the junctions of the straight lines are the springs created by *Djunkgao*, the diagonal lines the channels made in the mud of the mangrove swamps by the water flowing from the sacred wells, and the footmarks those of a mangrove curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*).[40]

### *The Djunkgao Sisters at Milmigarak*

This myth refers to the two *Djunkgao* sisters[41] at the Milmigarak waterhole, 776
situated on the Napier Peninsula, south of Elcho Island. In mythical times the 773*
two sisters, after travelling extensively over the surrounding country and naming 532*

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[37] *Mata* design, Fig. 64D.

[38] *Mata* design, Fig. 64E.

[39] The tracks of the same bird are present on the music stick of *Madalait*, Pl. 133E, F, and on the painted coffin, Pl. 102A.

[40] This is the design of the *Nainmeri mata* of Arnhem Bay, Fig. 64C.

[41] As mentioned earlier, p. 269, the *Djunkgao* group changed from a brother and sister to two sisters as the myth moved westward.

●776 the various creatures and plants, created a sacred waterhole, Milmigarak, which
*773 later was inhabited by the giant mythical serpent, *wangaruk*.

One day the elder sister, when dipping water from the springs, accidentally
*532 polluted it with her menstrual blood.[42] This pollution so annoyed the serpent that he caused the water to boil over, i.e. flow out.[43] Even at the present day,
[783 when *wangaruk* becomes annoyed by the presence of unauthorized trespassers,
841] he tries to leave the waterhole. But as soon as his head is visible the aboriginal medicine-men send him back by singing powerful chants, for should *wangaruk* start wandering over the land he would destroy everyone.

*Wangaruk* is of great length and size. He has a prominent nose, large eyes and a luxuriant beard. His head, however, is entirely bald, having the same
[821] appearance as a grey weathered boulder.[44] Although *wangaruk* has a voice like thunder, he does not appear to be associated with either the rain or the rainbow. Only the old men of the tribe are allowed to visit Milmigarak, drink its waters, or catch its fish.

On Pl. 87A the cross-hatched disc in the centre of the painting is the waterhole, Milmigarak. The other discs are non-sacred waters in the surrounding country, and the parallel lines native roads between them. The darker-coloured cross-hatched panels *a*, *b*, etc., represent the menstrual blood of the *Djunkgao* sister which polluted the waterhole.

### *The Djunkgao Sisters at Milingimbi*

*773 This is a fragment of a myth from Milingimbi, which relates how the
*532 *Djunkgao* women created a spring of water at Milmur, a place on the mainland, south of Elcho Island.

On Pl. 87D the two women, shown as lizards, with their carrying-baskets
[482] beside them, occupy the upper part of the painting. The design below symbolizes the sacred waterhole created by them.[45]

### *The Djunkgao Sisters at Goulburn Island*

Plate 86F depicts a swamp at Goulburn Island which is associated with the *Djunkgao* sisters.

On panel *b* are a number of water-birds catching fish, one of them having a fish in its mouth. Panel *a*, which is similar to the sand-hill design of the *mirdjingu mata* of Port Bradshaw,[46] represents the ripples on the swamp caused by the water-birds as they chase the fish.

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[42] This fragment has been borrowed from the *Wawalik* myth, see p. 278.

[43] The mythical serpents in the Oenpelli area cause their waterholes to overflow when they are annoyed (see p. 208, p. 218, etc.).

[44] The head of the mythical serpent living in the spring near the Elcho Island mission station is said to resemble a stone.

[45] This design is similar to that used for the sacred wells, shown in Pl. 87A. This may be a *mata* design belonging to a *dua* language group (see Fig. 61F).

[46] The same design is present on a crayon drawing dealing with *Djunkgao* at Port Bradshaw. Berndt, 1952, Pl. 7.

*773 *532 In panel c are unidentified palm trees with fruit hanging from their upper branches.[17] The upper sloping lines are the branches, the lower, the water flowing around the roots, and the cross-hatched central band the swamp.

### *The Wawalik Sisters*

*773 The story of the travels of the *Wawalik*[18] sisters is the basis of four great ceremonial cycles, the *djungguan*, the *gunabibi*, the *ulmark* and the *marndiella*. It is one of the most important myths of north and north-eastern Arnhem Land.

The myth associated with the bark painting (Pl. 88A), although abridged and differing somewhat from Warner's *Wawilak* myth, nevertheless contains the basic elements, i.e. the naming of the plants and food animals, their flight when placed on the fire, the profanement of the sacred pool, and the swallowing and later regurgitation of the women by the serpent, *jurlungur.*

*773 824 825 At Yirrkalla the aborigines told me that the *Wawalik* sisters came from a locality far away to the west. As they travelled they collected and named all the yams. They are: *arituna*, black inside; *jakwa*,[19] white inside; *mawoka*, milky white inside, with a black stem; *dilkarun*, with hair from its roots like a beard; *wunga-rapu*, red inside with black roots; *kungari*, a large round yam that must be soaked all night to make it edible; and many others. The sisters also caught and named a number of the food animals and reptiles—the kangaroo, *karitjimba*, the lizard, *tjunda*, the bandicoot, *warnt-kura*, the blanket lizard, *baltjira*, to mention but a few.

*773 When they reached a waterhole called Mirrirmina,[20] the elder sister, who was pregnant, begged her companion to make a camp because she felt that she was about to give birth to her child. The younger woman quickly built a bark hut, placed her sister inside, then lit a fire to cook the yams. However, no sooner had she placed them on the fire than they all came to life and ran away. Again she tried to prepare a meal, this time placing the dead animals and reptiles on the coals, but they too became alive and escaped into the forest. Both of the *Wawalik* women then retired into the hut and soon afterward the elder sister gave birth to a son.

*773 ● 776 In the bottom of the nearby waterhole, Mirrirmina, lived a huge mythical brown python called *jurlungur* (non-sacred name, *witik*). The odour of the blood of the birth so annoyed him that he first came to the surface and sent flashes of lightning into the sky, then, leaving his waterhole, approached the hut to punish the women. When the women saw the enraged serpent approaching, they sang many magical songs[51] and danced many powerful dances, to send the serpent back to his waterhole, but he still came on. In desperation, the women went inside and blocked the openings of their hut with bark and leaves to keep *jurlungur* at bay. But the serpent pushed his head inside, swallowed the child, then the younger and finally the elder sister. He then returned to the waterhole, but later came again to the surface and regurgitated the women and child, whose bodies are now large rocks. 773* 776

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[17] Panel a resembles the *mata* design of the *[illegible]* language group of Port Bradshaw (Fig. 63D), and the sloping lines on panel d that of the *kapin mata* (Fig. 65F).

[18] The *Wawalik* myth and the four ceremonies are described and analysed in considerable detail by Warner (1937), p. 335. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 32, make a short reference to the same myth and ceremonies. Berndt (1951a) also describes the *kunapipi* (*gunabibi*).

[19] The yam, *jakwa*, was also created by *Mainbuna*, the wife of *Bunbu-bunbu*, p. 311. The flower of the yam, *mawoka*, is used by the spirits at Bumbalia (Bremer Island). See myth of journey of the dead, p. 323.

[20] Warner (1937), p. 251.

On Pl. 88A, the rectangle at the top represents the bark hut built by the women. Within are the two *Wawalik* sisters and the newly-born child. *Jurlungur*, at the bottom, *a*, is leaving his sacred well. In the next position the serpent has encircled the hut, thrust his head inside and swallowed the child. On the lower right, he is returning to the sacred well of Mirrirmina after having swallowed the whole family. 773* 776● 532*

The designs on either side of *jurlungur* at *a* represent the water in the sacred Mirrirmina well. The central parallel lines, with the footmarks between them, indicate the path of the women leading to the hut. The design to the left of the path symbolizes the blood which offended *jurlungur*, and that to the left, dry ground. The designs on the right-hand edge of the painting again represent the water in the sacred well of Mirrirmina.

### *Banaitja and his Son, or Counterpart, Laitjun, at Blue Mud Bay*

*Banaitja*[52] and his son, or counterpart, *Laitjun*, are to the *jiritja* moiety of eastern Arnhem Land what *Djunkgao*, his sister *Madalait* and the *Wawalik* sisters are to the *dua*. Neither the mythology nor the ceremonies of *Banaitja* and *Laitjun* are as varied or as extensive as those of the *dua* ancestors. 616 773*

*Banaitja* came from the south-west[53] to Blue Mud Bay during the time that ordinary men and women lived in the world. He was a huge man, with deep chest and long powerful limbs, who always carried a long spear, called *balinin*, and a spear-thrower, on one end of which was a tassel of human hair.[54] As he walked around the countryside he shouted 'Wah-wah' in a voice so loud that 773*

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[51] One of the songs which the sisters sang is still used by the women in the *ulmark* ceremonies when they hear the sound of the log gong. This sound is supposed to be the voice of the serpent (Warner, 1937, p. 311).

[52] In some of the myths *Banaitja* recreated himself in the name of *Laitjun*, in another he is the father of *Laitjun*, and in still another he travelled as *Banaitja* through a number of localities, including Cape Arnhem. The fact, however, that Warner (1937), p. 361, in his description of the *jiritja narra* ceremonies of Milingimbi refers only casually to *Banaitja*, and makes no reference whatever to *Laitjun*, suggests both that the *Banaitja* myth is unimportant in the Milingimbi area, and that the creation of *Laitjun* is only a local development in the Blue Mud Bay area.

[53] The carved figure of *Banaitja*, Pl. 135A, B, shows him to be sub-incised. As sub-incision is not practised in Arnhem Land, this would suggest that the *Banaitja* myth extends south into the area of sub-incision. [304]

[54] A similar spear-thrower was used by the members of the *wirinikapara* moiety (equivalent to the *jiritja*) during the ceremonial bathing of the *arawaltja* rituals of Groote Eylandt, p. 56. [171]

*773 *532 at the lower part of his face represent his beard. In panel *b*, *Banaitja*, with many spears still embedded in him, is under the water of the Dukuru-waltjalapa swamp. His body is already covered with the special designs which, later, he showed to the *jiritja* groups of north-eastern Arnhem Land. In panel *c*, *Banaitja*, now *Laitjun*, is showing those designs to the assembled *jiritja* tribesmen. To the right of *Laitjun* is the eucalyptus tree, upside-down, into which he later transformed himself. The other five figures in the same panel are those of aborigines beating the ground with the *banaitja* bundles of paper-bark. The cross-hatching to the right of *Laitjun* is the dust that rises when the aborigines beat the ground with the *banaitjas*.

Plate 88B is a painting of *Laitjun*. The designs on his body are those belonging to the *dalwongu* language group (*mata*) whose land is at Blue Mud Bay. He is wearing a sacred bag around his neck and feathered bands on his arms.

Plate 89C deals with three mythical men of the *jiritja* moiety, among them being *Laitjun*. Their names are, *a*, *Kalparimu*, *b*, *Barama*, *c*, *Laitjun*. The zigzag lines joining the heads of the men together, at the feet of *a* and between *a* and *b*, depict the hair and *jiritja* string ornaments worn by the three men. The designs between *b* and *c* and to the right of *c* are those which were painted on the back of the men. Because the artist could not show the designs on the back of the figures, he has painted them alongside. The same design, which belongs to the *mangalili mata* of Blue Mud Bay, is repeated on the lower panel.

At the feet of *Barama*, *b*, is the triangular ceremonial ground[58] in which these three men conducted their sacred rituals. This painting deals with only a fragment of the *Laitjun* myth.

## *Tjambuwal, the Thunder-man*

● 776 *773 [616] The thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, is an important ancestor of the *dua* moiety of the Yirrkalla aborigines. *Tjambuwal* is the creator not only of the clouds, the storms and the thunder, but also of the little *dua* spirit children, *jurtu*, who descend from the sky in the raindrops to become human beings.

In the early days of the world *Tjambuwal* was a giant who lived at Waranaka, an island east of the Wessel Islands. One day, as he was sitting in the shade, *Tjambuwal* saw, in the distance, a Malay prau approaching his island. Annoyed at the intrusion, he waded into the sea and, taking hold of the boat, started to pull it to land. But the Malays attacked *Tjambuwal* with a large knife, cut off both his hands, turned the boat about and sailed for home. *Tjambuwal's* hands, however, joined miraculously to his body, and soon he was again in pursuit. That time he succeeded in pulling the prau to shore and was preparing to smash it in pieces when the crew again attacked him, this time amputating his forearms. Although his arms, like his hands, joined miraculously to his body,

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[361] [58] A triangular ceremonial ground is used by the aborigines of Milingimbi in the *djunggoan* ceremonies. Warner (1937), p. 265.

776 *773 *Tjambuwal* felt so ill from his wounds that he left the stranded prau on the beach, lay down in his camp and went to sleep.

During the night tide the Malays launched their boat and by the time *Tjambuwal* woke up in the morning were actually within sight of their homeland. When the thunder-man saw that his enemies had again escaped him, he was furious. Stretching himself to his full height, for he was a very tall man, and seeing the Malay prau far away in the distance, he pushed his way through the water at even greater speed than before, the waves which formed in front of him almost swamping the prau. *Tjambuwal* succeeded in pulling the prau back once more to Waranaka, even though the crew threw out their anchor to retard his progress and paddled strongly in the opposite direction. However, before *Tjambuwal* was able to destroy their boat the Malays succeeded in fatally wounding him by cutting off both of his arms at the shoulders. As *Tjambuwal* lay dying on the beach he called out in a voice of thunder:

'Listen to what I say. When I die I will go into the sky; you will always hear my voice in the storms.'

776 *773 821 *532 From that time onward *Tjambuwal* has lived in the clouds. When, at the beginning of the wet season, the clouds on which he travels reach a point of land called Jalboa, about three miles north-west of Yirrkalla, they get lower and lower until the thunder-man is able to throw a double-ended club, *burununda*,[59] at the cliff, which, as it strikes, shatters the rock, then breaks in many pieces. These pieces enter the ground and become edible yams, called *bualku*.[60] Almost immediately afterwards the thunder-man urinates and, as the urine falls down an adjacent cliff, it cuts a series of parallel meandering lines in the rock. *Tjambuwal* then picks up a number of white stones, *milarik* (once hailstones) which are lying at the base of the cliff[61] and throws them into the sky. These stones quickly grow in size and become large thunder-clouds, on the top of which *Tjambuwal* rides from place to place. As the storm develops the thunder-man, with another double-ended club, similar to the *burununda*, creates black rain clouds. The aborigines say that the thunder from the cumulus clouds is the voice of *Tjambuwal* and the banner of rain which falls from the base of a thunderstorm is his penis.[62]

Within the rain clouds *Tjambuwal* places many spirit children, *jurtu*. These little creatures descend in the raindrops into the sea and enter the bodies of either the *dua* fish or green turtles, or if on the land, the nests of *dua* wild honey and other foods.[63] Sometimes when *Tjambuwal* is sailing along on the top of the clouds he sees the rock cod, *akurata*, in the sea below. From his high place *Tjambuwal* transfixes the fish with his spear, *larapan*,[64] then descends into the sea and kills it with his club, *barlait*. The stench from the decaying fish, rising into the air, causes more rain clouds to form.

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[59] Pl. 130H. [60] Pl. 131E. [61] Pl. 91F.

[62] See carved figure of *Tjambuwal*, Pl. 130A, B.

[63] The spirit children of *Tjambuwal* will only live on the land or sea foods belonging to the *dua* moiety.

[64] Pl. 130J.

## THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

The aborigines produced seven bark paintings, two carved and painted figures 776 and five ceremonial objects which belonged to the myth of *Tjambuwal*.[65] 773*

Plate 90A illustrates the myth of *Tjambuwal* and the prau of the Malays. In the upper right-hand panel is the Malay prau with the characteristic tripod mast 532* and curious projections from the bow. Within the prau are five men, one of whom, with a large knife, is amputating the arms of *Tjambuwal* (lower right panel). The groups of curving parallel lines round *Tjambuwal's* arms represent the sea-water that was stained by the blood which poured from his wounds. Similar groups of lines round the body of *Tjambuwal* (lower right) are the waves rising in front of his legs as he waded after the prau.

In the upper left-hand panel the main design is a Malay anchor made of wood and shod with metal. This is the anchor the Malays threw overboard to hinder the progress of the prau as *Tjambuwal* dragged it to shore. The vertical parallel lines in this panel represent rain falling from the clouds above (triangular patterns). The lower left-hand panel pictures the injured *Tjambuwal* with his arms cut off at the shoulders. Round him are the curving clouds, *wulmu*, usually associated with the thunder-man.[66]

Plate 90B is the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*.[67] In one hand is the spear, *larapan* (Pl. 130J) he used to capture the rock cod, *akurata*, and in the other his club, *barlait* (Pl. 130C) with which he killed it. The curving lines over the ancestor's head are clouds called *wulmu*. On the right, the clouds are pouring rain upon the earth, and on the left are the 'pink' clouds which, the aborigines say, form in the sky when the rain is finished.

Plate 90C shows *Tjambuwal* holding above his head the spear thrown to kill the rock cod. When a meteor speeds across the sky the aborigines believe [821] that *Tjambuwal* has thrown his spear, and that the fiery trail of the meteor is its path. The shaft of the spear is curved to represent the path of the meteor.

Plate 90D deals with the green turtle, *gariwa*, the storm clouds and the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*.[68] In panels *a* and *b* are two green (*dua*) turtles in the sea-weed (shown by curving lines of cross-hatching). The crescent-shaped designs in the panels on the left of the turtles are waves beating against each other, and those on the right, rough seas breaking on a reef of rocks, indicated by the central cross-hatched panel, *c*. On the upper right-hand panel, *d* symbolizes a large rain cloud, while below it are several thunder-men who have come down from the cloud; rain is still falling from their feet (shown as vertical parallel lines). In their left hands the thunder-men hold the club, *barlait*, and in their right the spear, *larapan*, with which they have transfixed the rock cod, *akurata*. They are holding the rock-cod in the sky on the ends of their spears. Immediately to the left of the figures of *Tjambuwal* is a double-ended club, *burununda*, and a spear.

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[65] The carved and painted objects are described in Part 5.

[66] See also bark paintings, Pl. 90B, D.

[67] Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

[68] Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

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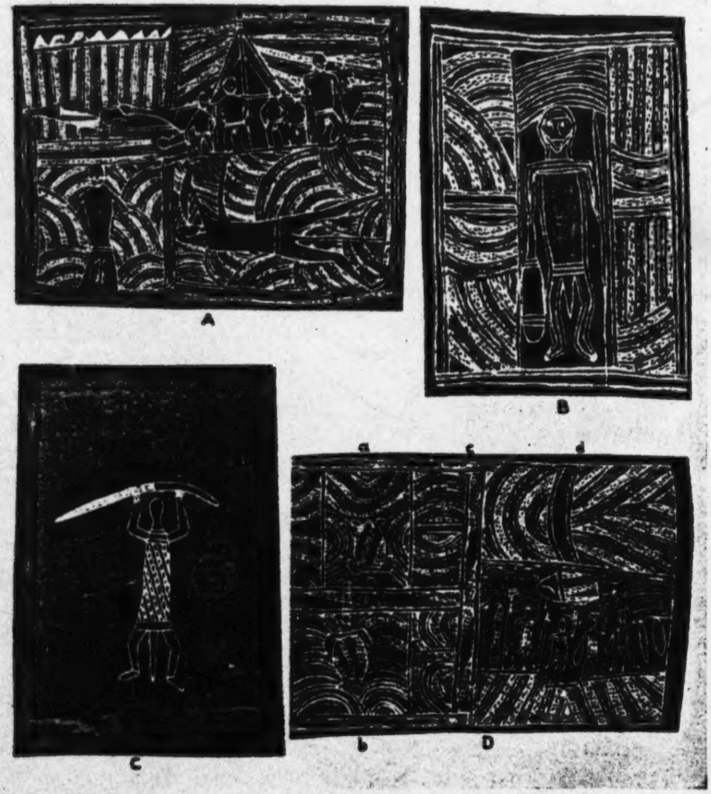

PLATE 90. Bark paintings, Yirrkalla

A Tjambuwal and the Malays
B Tjambuwal
C Tjambuwal and his spear, larapan
D Tjambuwal and the rock cod

### *The Totemic Place, Jalboa, of the Thunder-man, Tjambuwal*

About four miles north-west of Yirrkalla is a short headland, from the point of which a small reef extends into the sea. This headland, called Jalboa, is the totem place of the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal* (Fig. 57). 773* 776 133 823

On its southern end the distorted rock strata of the cliff have formed into a number of more or less vertical irregular gutters which, according to the myth, are made when *Tjambuwal* urinates. On the point of the cliff about fifty yards to the north are the rocks which are shattered by *Tjambuwal* (Pl. 91E) when he strikes them with his club, *burununda*, and on its slopes a number of white stones, *milarik* (Pl. 91F). It is these, or the spirits of them, which *Tjambuwal* throws into the sky to make thunder-clouds.[69]

On the adjacent beach are two small casuarina trees (Pl. 91A), once the bodies of *Tjambuwal* and his relatives. Not far from these casuarinas is a large fig tree (Pl. 91B), the transformed body of another of *Tjambuwal's* relatives. The fruit of this fig tree is sacred, as indeed is the whole area at the base of the cliff. [778] No one would dare to eat that fruit, for he would surely die, nor would he dig for ochre in the base of the cliff for, if he did, *Tjambuwal* would kill him. Should the women even look at the place where *Tjambuwal* urinated they must atone for their misdeeds by a gift of food to the members of the thunder-man's totem. If not, *Tjambuwal* will make them ill. [783]

### *The Thunder-man, Bolngo (or Tjambuwal) at Wulwulwi, Koolatong River*

This version of the *Tjambuwal* myth places the totemic site at Wulwulwi, on the Koolatong River. The myth differs slightly in detail, but not in general form, from that at Yirrkalla; *Tjambuwal* becomes *Bolngo*;[70] the looped clouds, *wulmu*, become *djalijal*; and *Bolngo* urinates from a high tree,[71] instead of, as in the *Tjambuwal* myth, from the clouds.[72] 773* 776 184 532*

On the middle panel of Pl. 89B is *Bolngo* urinating on the ground beneath. This urine later rises into the sky and becomes rain. There is a line of hailstones, *milarik* (shown as ovals) to the right of *Bolngo*, and looped clouds, *djalijal*, above his head. The series of squares[73] on either side of *Bolngo* symbolize the open sea near Wulwulwi.

### *The Thunder-man, Tjambuwal, at Naitjulma, Arnhem Bay*

When the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, was camped at Naitjulma, Arnhem Bay, two of his sons died and their bodies were transformed into white stones, called *milarik* or *jarambai*. At the beginning of the wet season the thunder-man throws 773* 776

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[69] See bark paintings of *Bolngo*, Pl. 89B.

[70] Elkin and the Berndts (1950, p. 11) refer to the thunder-man under the name of Bunugu.

[71] See myth of Bolngo [illegible] pipe, p. 393. [72] See myth of *Tjambulwal*, p. 282.

[73] This is the design belonging to the *dua tjapu mala* of Caledon Bay language group (Fig. 63A).

[text continues on p. 289]

these stones (or their spirits) into the sky, so that they will become cumulus 773*
clouds in which he can travel from place to place.[74] The thunder-man also 776●
throws his spear, *larapan*, at the rock cod, *akurata*, and kills the fish. But instead of eating it he allows it to become putrid, so that the stench will rise into the [821]
sky and create more rain clouds.[75]

The two figures on Pl. 89A are the dead sons of *Tjambuwal*, whose bodies 773*
were transformed into the white stones, *milarik* (cross-hatched ovals). The 776
parallel black lines on the left-hand edge are the spears, *larapan*, used by *Tjambuwal* to transfix the rock cod (the three cross-hatched ovals at *a*). The 532*
pear-shaped figure at *b* is the yam *bawal*,[76] the food of *Tjambuwal*. The black area at *c* is a rain cloud formed from the stench of the decaying rock cod.

### *The Thunder-man, Tjambuwal, and the Man, Maijaunguri, at Jalboa*

One day a mythical man, *Maijaunguri*, went fishing along the coast near the 773*
totemic place, Jalboa, of the thunder-man and speared many rock cod, *akurata*. 532*
He returned to his camp, made a fire and put on the fish to cook. The smoke and the odour of the cooking fish, ascending into the sky, attracted the attention of *Tjambuwal*, who happened to be passing in a cumulus cloud. On looking down he saw that *Maijaunguri* had speared and was cooking a fish which, belonging only to him, was forbidden all other people. *Tjambuwal*, angry over the outrage, created a rain-storm to extinguish the fire, then descended from the clouds and killed the offender with his club, *barlait*.[77]

Plate 89D illustrates the myth of the mythical man, *Maijaunguri*, and the rock cod. In the bottom panel is the man spearing the fish, which he has placed on the fire, *a*. In the top panel is *Tjambuwal*. Above him at *b* is the large cloud in which he was travelling when he smelt the odour of the cooking fish. The cross-hatched vertical panels on either side of the thunder-man represent the sky and broken clouds.

### *Oijal and his Sister, Neri-neri*

In the early days of the world *Oijal* and his sister, *Neri-neri*, travelled along 773*
the western coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria and through north-eastern Arnhem Land, creating many rivers and other natural features.

When camping at Dimbuka, near Blue Mud Bay, the brother and sister made several honey baskets. Then, taking a stone-headed spear, a spear-thrower and a stone axe, they set out to find a nest of the *dua* male wild honey, *jarupang*. By following a bee flying towards its home, they located a hive in a hollow tree near Trial Bay. *Oijal* and *Neri-neri* cut the tree down and, splitting it open,

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[74] The aborigines believe that there is a thunder-man in every cumulus cloud, even those which form on the top of the smoke of a bush fire. [821]

[75] In the *jiritja* myth of *Waikinbu*, rotting fish left behind by the mythical man caused the thunder-clouds to form (p. 286).

[76] See Pl. 131E for the illustration of this yam, called *bualku* at Yirrkalla.

[77] See the club, *barlait*, Pl. 130C.

This was a signal for a number of *Bukalatji* men, who were hiding among the 773*
trees, to attack the unsuspecting *Muruma* and spear him to death. His body is 532*
now a rock which projects out of the sea near the shore at Jalboa (map, Fig. 57). [823]

Two bark paintings illustrate the mythical story.

The central figure in Pl. 96A is *Muruma*. In one hand he holds four fish and in the other a twin-barbed fishing spear with which he has transfixed another fish. The crescents above his head and on the left-hand side of the painting represent curious loop-like clouds, *wulmu*.[96] The circles and cones along the right and left-hand edges are also clouds. In the upper part of the painting *Muruma* is asleep under a tree, with the fish (upper left) cooking on the fire, *a*, beside him.*

Plate 96D deals with the death of *Muruma* at the hands of the *Bukalatji*. In the centre is *Muruma* spearing fish and stingrays. In the lower left he is resting by his camp-fire, around which are the fish he is cooking. The *Bukalatji* are grouped along the upper edge. At the right, the unfortunate *Muruma* is being speared by one of the *Bukalatji*. Already there are many spears in his body.

### *Nakundia and Mununatan*

*Nakundia* and *Mununatan* were two fishermen who once lived at Blue Mud Bay. One day, on returning to their camp after a day's fishing, they were set upon and speared to death by aborigines from a hostile group.

In the lower right panel, *a*, of Pl. 96C are *Nakundia* (lower) and *Mununatan*
(upper), both with a large fish in each hand. Above them is their canoe with
the sail set. The next two panels to the left are the oval ceremonial grounds,
similar to those used in the *arawaltja* ceremonies of Groote Eylandt (Fig. 6). Still [171]
further left is one of the fishermen standing on a rock, shown as an oval beneath
his feet, with a fish in each hand. Above him are five fishing lines with hooks
and sinkers attached. In the lower left, *b*, of the left-hand lower panel, one man
(unidentified) is spearing another (possibly referring to the death of either
*Mununatan* or *Nakundia*). There are six spears to the left of this group. The
designs on the upper half at *c* are totemic rocks and a palm tree, upper right.

The men responsible for the death of *Nakundia* and *Mununatan* are shown
in the central transverse panel *d*, while in the upper left panel, *e*, are the two [411]
dead fishermen transfixed with spears. At the right of the same panel are many
fighting spears of a type used only in avenging ceremonies. [796]

### *Minjapa and Wuluwil, the Turtle Fishermen*

Two mythical fishermen, *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil*, one day captured a large turtle. They brought it into Jalboa, about three miles north-west of Yirrkalla,[97] and cut it up in the same manner as do the aborigines of today. The fishermen, 773* the canoe and the pieces of turtle meat are now natural features at Jalboa. 532*

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[96] These clouds, *wulmu*, also belong to the thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, Pl. 90D. It is [776]
evident that *Muruma* and *Tjambuwal*, both belonging to the *dua* moiety, are associated in the [616]
mythical stories.

*Reproduced in *Australia: Aboriginal Paintings—Arnhem Land*, 1954, Pl. XXVI.

[97] This is also the totemic place of *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man, and *Muruma*, the fisherman.

In the upper right of the painting, Pl. 96B, *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil* are spearing the turtle. They are shown again seated on either side of a rock, a black circle. Below them are two casuarina trees, Pl. 91A,[98] which grow near the [824] totemic place. The metamorphosed bodies of the two men, *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil*, now the turtle-rock[99] Ai-aika (Pl. 97A), are indicated at *a*, on the outer edge. There is a similar design immediately beneath the turtle. A semi-circular design near the tail of the turtle is the metamorphosed canoe, now a low red rock in the shallow water (Pl. 97C, on the left). The oval *b*, on the lower edge of the painting, is the carapace of the turtle (Pl. 97B). In the lower right are two pieces of flesh, *baiwu*, from the inside of the turtle's front flippers, and above is the club, *barlait*, with which the hunters killed the turtle. Above the carapace are two pieces of meat (more or less triangular figures) from the chest, called *tritiri*. The fat from the creature is indicated by a barred oval on the extreme upper left. The turtle-spear and spear-thrower are on the right-hand edge at *c*. Immediately to the left of them are two more pieces of meat from the inside of the front flipper.

The fishermen, the canoe, and the parts of the dismembered turtle have all 773* been transformed into natural features on the sea-shore at Jalboa. The turtle-rock, Ai-aika (Pl. 97A) is the metamorphosed bodies of the turtle fishermen, 532* *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil*. The canoe is a small low rock on the extreme left (Pl. 823 97C), the carapace (Pl. 97B) and parts of the dismembered turtle (Pl. 97D) large eroded boulders on the coast.

There is hardly a rock or a tree in this locality that is not linked, in one [776] way or another, with either *Tjambuwal*, the thunder-man, *Muruma*, the fisherman, or *Minjapa* and *Wuluwil*, the turtle-fishers.

### *Tjuna-tjuna, Wururunga and the Bukalatji*

Two brothers, *Tjuna-tjuna*[1] and *Wururunga*, were the first people to live on 773* Dambalia (Bremer Island). They were paddling to the mainland in their bark 532* canoe on one occasion when they noticed smoke among the trees and, on sneaking ashore, saw a *Bukalatji* man, *Djunmundia*, asleep by the fire. He was [482] wearing, around his neck, a particularly large carrying-bag.

The brothers said to each other, "This is the man who killed our father last [628] year. We now have our chance to pay him back."[2]

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[98] The same trees as those mentioned in the *Tjambuwal* myth. [225]

[99] The aborigines throw stones on the top of this rock in order to ensure success in catching turtles.

[1] In the myth associated with the two carved heads, Pl. 139D, E, *Tjuna-tjuna* is called *Bauaramin*.

[2] Blood feuds are common in Arnhem Land and the cause of most of the killings. They [628] can, however, be ended at a ceremonial peace-making fight, the *makarata*. See Warner (1937), p. 174, also the myth of crocodile and stingray and the origin of the first *makarata*, Pl. 122D.

[text continues on p. 305]

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764 climb to the top of the platform and, taking the corpse from those below, lay it on the bed of leaves,[15] face upwards.

764 775 [534] As the two men descend, others blow a wooden trumpet informing the *Mokoi*[16] of the death, knowing that they will take the spirit from the locality for a time so that it will not be a danger to its living relatives. At the same time another man climbs a tall tree and makes a noise like the night-bird, *kurawak* (associated with the *Mokoi*).[17] As soon as the aboriginal in the tree hears the *Mokoi* coming (they make a coughing sound) he descends quickly and with the rest of the mourners runs quickly from the burial ground. This is done, not only to make the dead man's spirit go with the *Mokoi*, but because the *Mokoi*, particularly that of the newly dead man, are dangerous to the living.

### (ii) *The Cleansing of the Bones*

764 For the next two or three months no one goes to the burial platform. When, however, putrefaction is complete, the maggots from the body have entered the ground and turned into blowflies, the aborigines meet to perform the second phase in the burial rituals, the cleansing of the bones.[18]

[533] Totemic dances belonging to the clan of the dead man are performed to the accompaniment of much singing, the beating of music sticks and the blowing of the wooden trumpet. The noise of these rituals is supposed to scare the spirit of the dead man and his ghostly attendants, the *Mokoi*, from the burial platform. The body is lifted from the platform or, if an earth burial, exhumed and a curious ritual performed over it, in which two men sit, one on either side of the corpse, whilst a third thrusts a spear into it, saying that he has speared a turtle.[19] The women, who have been sitting at one side, then come forward, take the skeleton apart, wash the bones in water and wrap them in paper-bark to remove the smell.? At the end of three days the women unwrap the bones, rub them with red ochre and place them in a temporary bark coffin, on the outside of which the men have painted the totemic symbols of the deceased.[20]

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[15] If when a man dies there are only a few people present, the corpse is wrapped in paper bark and buried in the ground.

[774 779] [16] The *Mokoi* (*jiritja*) and *Wuna* (*dua*) are spirits living in the jungle, who are always seeking souls of the newly-dead for company. A dead person has two spirits, one, *wakinu*, which finally goes to a distant 'heaven' (p. 326) and one which stays on earth. The latter are the *Mokoi*. (See Warner (1937), p. 116; also p. 338.) There are, however, many kinds of *Mokoi*, and our information about them is very limited.

[17] See ceremonial staff of *kurawak*, Pl. 131E.

[18] See description of bark coffins, p. 317.

[19] The significance of this ritual is obscure. Warner (1937), p. 113, refers to it. A similar ritual is supposed to be carried out at Purelko, the final resting place of the *dua* dead, p. 325.

[171] [20] Frazer (1936), p. 5, mentions that, 'In Misol, a small island to the north-west of New Guinea. . . . the body, wrapped in clothes, is deposited on a scaffold built for it in the forest. From time to time the relations come to inspect the corpse until decomposition is complete. The skeleton is then brought to the place, generally a cave, where the bones of all the dead inhabitants of the village are collected.' This is a similar burial custom to that carried out by the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land and might well be the source from which the Arnhem Land custom originated.

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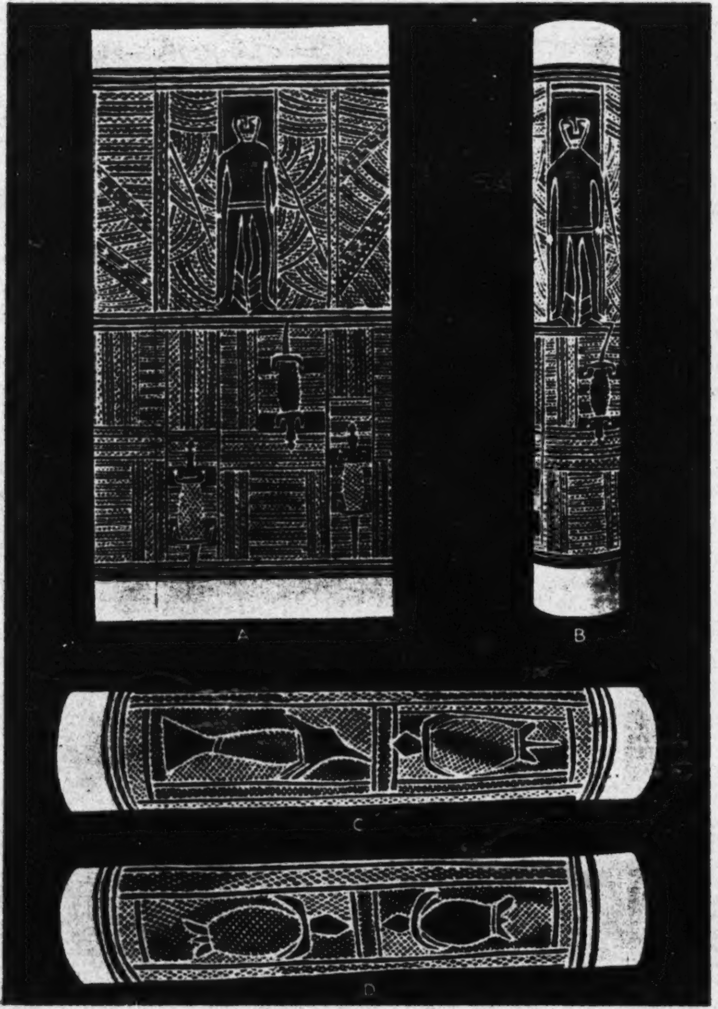

**PLATE 102.** Coffins, Yirrkalla and Milingimbi *Betty Hunter*

A, B The thunder-man, Tjambuwal C, D The green turtle, gariwa

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1. North of Arnhem Bay
2. South of Arnhem Bay
3. Elcho Island
4. South of Rocky Beach, south of Yirrkalla
5. Dambalia (Bremer Island)
6. Wessel Islands
7. A small unidentified island in Buckingham Bay
8. English Company Islands, near Cape Wilberforce
9. Buckingham Bay, south side
10. Blue Mud Bay
11. Northern Blue Mud Bay
12. West Blue Mud Bay
13. Koolatong River
14. Between Caledon and Blue Mud Bays
15. Caledon Bay
16. Mt Saunders, between Port Bradshaw and Caledon Bay
17. Jelangbara, near Port Bradshaw
18. Port Bradshaw

I also collected a painting and myth from the Milingimbi area, which dealt with the Djiraia, the *dua* home of the dead (analagous to Purelko), and the morning star, *barnumbir*. Except for different names and locality, the beliefs are essentially the same. This painting indicates that the *dua* moiety of north-eastern Arnhem Land have more than one 'heaven'.

[776] Djiraia, the home of the dead and the morning star, is situated on a rocky island somewhere east of the English Company Islands (Fig. 1). Two spirit men, *Jumundik* and *Dalnuranu*, are in charge. When a member of the tribes who live adjacent to Milingimbi dies, no matter where he is, his spirit, after the burial ceremonies are completed, goes straight to Djiraia.[53] As the spirit approaches the shore two masked plovers announce his arrival. The spirits of the dead, the *Mokoi*, then stand on the shore to welcome him.

If a man or woman has been evil, malicious or bad-tempered, he is changed into a person of good nature before he enters the spirit land, because all must be happy and at peace with each other. Also, should the spirit be aged, infirm or sick, he is made young and healthy again, for in that country all must be well. In Djiraia there is no want, no hardships and no quarrels. There is an abundance of food everywhere, fish in the swamps and the seas, and kangaroos, emus and other game in the forest. It is never cold, so that everyone, being young and transformed into a good person, is happy. The days are spent in hunting and eating, and the evenings in song and ceremony.

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The morning star, *barnumbir*,[54] is kept in a cave under the care of two women, who sleep all day and most of the night. But just before dawn these women wake up and tell the two men, *Jumundik* and *Dalnuranu*, that it is time they stopped their singing and let the morning star out of the cave to wake up mankind, otherwise they will sleep all day long. When *barnumbir* is first released it dances up and down on the surface of the sea. It then climbs up a tall pandanus tree, then flies through the air to visit a number of localities where the aborigines live. When the dawn breaks the women take hold of the string

[825]

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[53] According to Warner (1937), p. 366, these spirits are carried by the porpoises (dolphins).

[54] See Milingimbi myth of morning star, Warner (1937), p. 527.

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attached to *barnumbir*, pull it back and imprison it in the cave until the next morning.[55]

On the lower left of Pl. 101A is *Jumundik*, with his wooden trumpet to the left of him and his two music sticks to the right. On the right is *Dalnuranu*, who, with *Jumundik*, is in charge of Djiraia. His wooden trumpet, *a*, and music sticks are on his right. The footprints are those of the *Mokoi* spirits at Djiraia. There was no explanation for the fish. The white circle on the top of the central design is the morning star, *barnumbir*, and the long rectangle below, the rays of light, called *balai-aba*, which issue from it.

A number of spirit people provide food for the inhabitants of their respective 'heavens'. *Turi-turi* is one of them.[56] 775
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One day *Turi-turi*, an expert fisherman, set out in a bark canoe to hunt for turtles. When he was far out to sea, a heavy storm came up, broke the canoe in halves and drowned *Turi-turi*.

After his death the spirit of *Turi-turi* went to Purelko, where he still spends all of his time catching green turtles for the inhabitants of that spirit land. The *dua Mokoi*, *Balu-balu*, also provide food for their companions at Purelko.[57]

Plate 106A shows the man, *Turi-turi*, paddle in hand, standing in his canoe. To the left is the green turtle he wanted to capture. The white cross-hatching on the lower edge represents the waves which destroyed *Turi-turi's* canoe and finally drowned him. The remainder of the background is the sea.

### (ii) *The Journey of the Jiritja Spirits of the Dead*

When, at the completion of the burial ceremonies, the bones of the dead man are placed in the log coffin, the spirit leaves its bones, with which it has been associated since death, and, guided by the call of the jungle-fowl, makes its way to a forest, Gurila, north of Port Bradshaw. There it is met by female *Mokoi* called the *Wulu-wulu*,[58] whose duty it is to assist the spirit of newly-dead to reach the *jiritja* 'heaven', Nalkuma. The *Wulu-wulu* takes the new spirit to another *Mokoi*, *Kultana*, the head man of Nalkuma, who first gives him two paddles, then instructs him how to make a special wooden canoe, called *jililbun*,[59] in which both can travel to Nalkuma. When the canoe is finished and the two are ready to set out on their journey, the women, *Wulu-wulu*, give the new spirit two seed pods, *gurung-guru*, of the *menin* vine (*Mucuna gigantea*),[60] which will serve him as a passport to Nalkuma. Any spirit who tries to gain admittance to the land of the dead without this passport is hunted away.

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[55] This is similar to the Yirrkalla myth of the morning star, p. 326, except that at Yirrkalla the two women object to the release of the morning star.

[56] The myths of *Turi-turi* and the *Balu-balu* are analagous to those of the *jiritja Mokoi* who come to Cape Arnhem in their wooden canoes to capture dugongs for the inhabitants of Nalkuma.

[57] See myth of *Balu-balu*, p. 172, associated with a painted paddle, Pl. 144E, F.

[58] See myth of carved figure of *Wulu-wulu*, p. 343.

[59] In another part of the same myth this canoe is called *Lampu*.

[60] See Pl. 100C for illustration of these seed pods.

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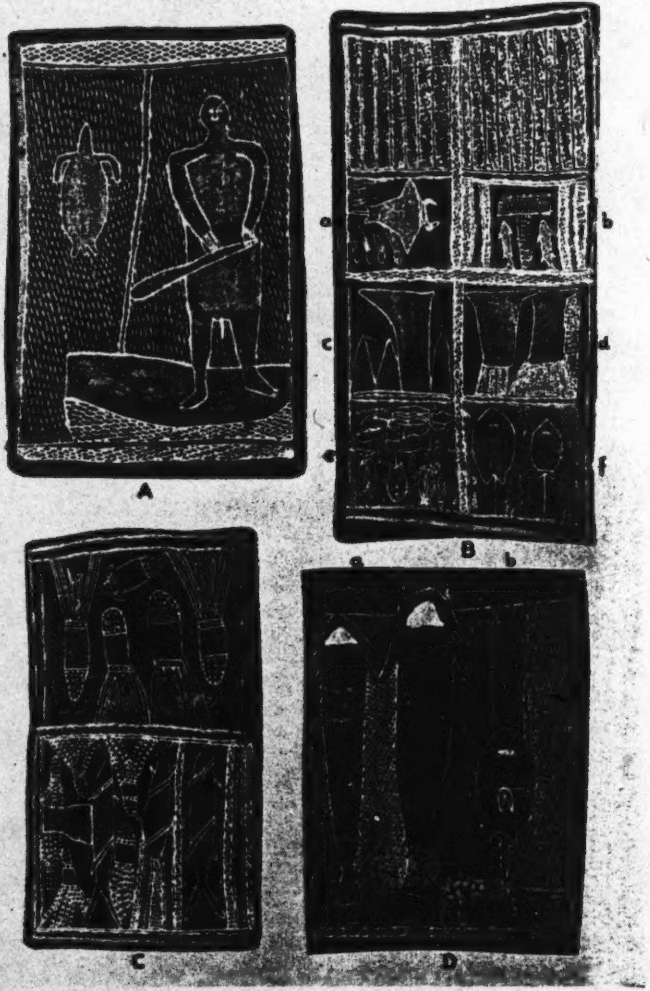

Plate 106. Bark paintings, Yirrkalla

A The man, Turi-turi
B Totemic creatures, Cape Arnhem
C The queen fish, turtle and octopus
D The whale and the stingray

*773 an axe he used in the construction of his house. The six vertical lines in panel *a*
*532 are the posts of the house, made from local timber, and the cross-hatching between them, walls of plaited bamboo. The transverse panels *b*, *b*, are rafters of the roof (rectangles *c*, *c*) which were thatched with the leaves of an unidentified palm.

The three rectangles at *d* are wells the *Baijini* men dug, and the footmarks in the central vertical panel, those made by the men during their house-building.
[777 The *Baijini* made their fire outside the house. Their pipes were similar to those
276] used by Europeans.[79]

### Spirit People

776 The spirit people, or *Mokoi* (the *dua* moiety call them *Wuna*) all appear to have been living people. At the present time, they pay occasional visits to the land of the living, where they spend most of their time in the jungles. Although the aborigines are somewhat afraid of the *Mokoi*, as indeed the *Mokoi* are of human beings,[80] I did not personally collect any evidence that they were ill-disposed toward living people. Warner,[81] however, refers to their malignant nature. We know little about the *Mokoi* and hope that later research will reveal more fully their place in the life and beliefs of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land.

### *The Mokoi, Rangi-rangi and Kultana, of Port Bradshaw*

*773 During creation times two men, *Rangi-rangi* and *Kultana*,[82] both of them expert fishermen, came to Port Bradshaw to spear dugong. The day was so windy that the spray from the waves beating against the sides of the canoe rose into the sky, causing heavy thunder-clouds to form and rain to fall. This originated the first wet season. As soon as this happened the stingrays, heavily pregnant, travelled to the mangrove swamps to give birth to their young among the roots
[825] of the trees. Since that time the young stingrays are always born among the roots of the mangroves at the beginning of the wet season.

The man, *Kultana*, is now one of the *Mokoi* who sometimes lives at Port
[775] Bradshaw. It is his duty to assist the spirits of the dead during their journey from earth to the *jiritja* heaven, Nalkuma (p. 331).

*773 Plate 109E, F, is the obverse and reverse sides of a painted paddle.

*532 On panel *a* are the two men, *Rangi-rangi* and *Kultana*, in their canoe, which has since been transformed into a paper-bark tree. The cross-hatching below the canoe symbolizes the rough seas and that above the canoe, the clouds created by the spray from the waves. On panel *b* is the dugong, *balwakmeri*, with a dugong spear on either side. In panel *c* the two rain-clouds were created by the spray from the sides of the canoe. These same clouds are also painted in panel *e*.

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[79] See painted pipe, Pl. 128A.

[80] See myths of *Rangi-rangi* and *Kultana*, p. 346, and *Birikiri*, p. 348.

[81] Warner (1937), p. 73.

[82] *Kultana* is now the head man of the *jiritja* heaven, Nalkuma, p. 329.

'Make my eyesight keen so that I can see the flight of the bees.' 222 773* 788

This ritual enabled the hunter to see the bees and to follow their flight more easily,[85] because of *Borolo-borolo's* ability to do so during mythical times. Even though, at the present time, the wooden penis is no longer in its totemic place, the aborigines still visit the same spot and repeat the formula, which they say still makes their eyesight much clearer.[86]

*Borolo-borolo's* wife, *Mainbuno*, was also expert in locating the wild yam, *jakwa*, and every place in which she once dug for them is known. Today, the women visit these places and, putting their digging sticks on the spot where *Mainbuno* had dug previously, say, 'Brr' in a low voice. After that, they find many *jakwa* yams.

Two paintings, a painted wooden penis and a bark figure (not published) illustrate the myth. 773* 532*

On Pl. 110A is *Borolo-borolo* walking through the grass, with his hand shielding his eyes from the sun as he watches the flight of a wild bee towards its hive. On the left is an emu and a wallaby which ran away when they saw *Borolo-borolo*, and on the right the three yams, *jakwa*, which *Borolo-borolo's* wife, *Mainbuno*, had created. The tubers are at the top of the painting and their foliage is at the bottom.

Plate 110C is a duplicate of the wooden penis of *Borolo-borolo* which the aborigines made for me and on which they painted the design of the yam, *jakwa*.

Plate 110D[87] pictures *Borolo-borolo* with his two wives, *Mainbuno* and *Wurungil*.[88] *Borolo-borolo* is setting out to hunt kangaroos and emus and his wives to collect *jiritja* honey, the female, *barangit*, which burns the mouth, and the male, *kamo*, a pleasant-tasting honey. *Mainbuno* is in the upper position, and *Wurungil* in the lower. Below the family is a forest of stringy-bark trees (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*). The cross-hatched panels on the right represent the wild honey collected by the women, the three dark-coloured areas being *barangit* and the light-coloured ones *kamo*.

## Spirit People

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Five bark paintings and an engraved paddle deal with the spirit people, the *Mokoi*, some of whom travel regularly from Nalkuma, the *jiritja* heaven, to their totemic place on the southern side of Cape Arnhem[89] so that they can spear dugongs, turtles and fish to provide the inhabitants of Nalkuma with food. Two others, the woman *Wulu-wulu* and the man *Kultana*, visit Port Bradshaw so

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[85] The method of locating the hives is to watch the direction of the flight of the bees, an exacting task, for the insects are little larger than the common house fly.

[86] This is, to some degree, an increase centre. The penis of *Borolo-borolo* is also an example of the care that must be taken before attaching an erotic significance to any representation of the sex organ.

[87] Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

[88] Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 41, Pl. 3A, figure and describe a wooden trumpet or drone tube associated with *Borolo-borolo* and the yams.

[89] Map, Fig. 57.

[text continues on p. 345]

that they can help the spirits of the newly dead on their journey to Nalkuma, 776
*Wulu-wulu* giving them the bean of the *menin* tree,[90] a passport into the *jiritja* 532
heaven, and *Kultana* assisting to paddle them across the sea to their future 775
home.[91]

### *The Mokoi and the Turtle Hunt*

Plate 110E is the story of a turtle hunt by some of the *Mokoi* who had paddled 773*
in a wooden canoe from Nalkuma to Cape Arnhem, and the incidents connected
with the hunt. 532*

The three *Mokoi* paddled through rough water (four cross-hatched rectangles, 776
*a*, on left of right-hand panel) to reach a group of rocks (squares with diagonal lines at *b*) so that they could spear the turtles living among those rocks. On their way the spirit-men saw a devil-ray, *b* (*Daemonata alfredi*).[92] The large gills are shown as slits, and the fat within the body as a crescent. In the left panel are dugongs, *merinjunga*, feeding on the submarine grass, *gumata*. The fish are *tinimbu*, queen fish, and squares with diagonal lines, rocks in the sea frequented by the turtles, upper edge.

### *The Mokoi and the Dugong, Merinjunga*

Two mythical dugongs, *merinjunga* (*Dugong australis*), which once lived in
the sea at Cape Arnhem were continuously being pursued by the *Mokoi* who
came from the *jiritja* heaven, Nalkuma. The *Mokoi*, however, were not always
successful because, just as they were about to spear the creatures, a storm would
develop and allow the dugongs to escape.[93] Later the canoe was transformed
into a large rock on the sea coast between Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw, 823
and the dugongs into a rock in the water near by. The place of the stingray,
which also appears in the painting, is a hole in the ground. When travelling
in their canoes the aborigines will not go near the totemic place of the dugong,
for if they did the dugongs would send up so much smoke and fire that they
would be destroyed.

On the land, near this totemic place, is a paper-bark tree, once a dugong, 778
which resembles that creature in appearance, and near by is a termite mound 789
also a transformed dugong. When the aborigines wish to increase the supply of
dugongs at a particular locality they take a branch from the dugong tree and a 825
piece of earth from the termite mound and throw them both into the fire. When
the wood is burnt to ash the men take the heated termite earth from the fire,
pound it into dust, mix it with the wood ash and throw the mixture into the
sea where the dugongs feed. This dust from the totemic tree and the termite
mound will create many dugongs in that locality.[94]

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[90] Pl. 108C. [91] Myth, p. 331.

[92] This huge, cumbersome but harmless sea-creature sometimes reaches a length of fifteen 136
feet and a weight of a ton.

[93] Dugongs can only be captured on windless days when the sea is calm. 225

[94] This increase ritual is not unlike that carried out at the increase centre for parrot-fish 171
at Winchelsea Island, p. 84.

776 *773 There are two bark paintings illustrating the dugong hunt at the totemic place of the *Mokoi*, between Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw.

*532 Plate 111A shows two *Mokoi* in a canoe hunting four dugongs. The black line between the two lower dugongs is the long dugong spear. The white cross-hatching in this panel indicates the rough seas which allowed the dugongs to escape. The upper and lower left-hand panels, *a* and *c*, are sand-banks near the totemic place of the dugongs and *b* is a mythical stingray. By burying itself in the sand the stingray has clouded the water so much that it has the appearance of smoke, indicated by cross-hatching.

Plate 111D deals with the same totemic place as the previous painting. On the lower right are two *Mokoi* in their canoe, and below them three queen fish, *tinimbu*. In the left-hand panel the four dugongs are being hunted by the *Mokoi* and on the upper right is the upturned canoe of the hunters, now a large rock on the seashore. Cross-hatching, as before, indicates rough seas which prevented the capture of the dugongs.

### *The Mokoi, Delururu, Rangi-rangi and Kultana*

[616 775] Two brothers, *Delururu* and *Rangi-rangi*, accompanied by *Kultana*, who carry the spirits of the *jiritja* dead to their heaven, left Nalkuma in their canoe, *Lampu*, and paddled to the totemic place of the *Mokoi* at Cape Arnhem to spear dugongs. They had captured several and were resting on the beach when they saw a mortal man searching for turtle eggs. This gave the party such a fright that they hurried back to their canoe and paddled homeward as quickly as possible.[95]

In the centre of Pl. 111B are three *Mokoi* in their wooden canoe, called *Lampu*,[96] who have just speared a dugong. Reading from the left, their names are *Delururu*, *Rangi-rangi* and *Kultana*. The cross-hatching around the dugong is the rough sea water and the triangular patterns, *a*, the cumulus clouds created by the serpent, *bilumbira*. Above the canoe are five queen fish, *tinimbu*.

### *The Mokoi, Jambula and Bulanuna*

Two *Mokoi*, a father, *Jambula*, and his son, *Bulanuna*, went to sea in their canoe, called *Tamalania*,[97] and speared a hawksbill turtle. This they took to a locality at Cape Arnhem, cooked and ate it. The canoe and the turtle are now parts of the topography of the coast of Cape Arnhem.

At *a*, on the right-hand panel of Pl. 111C, is *Jambula*, left, and his son, *Bulanuna*, returning to land with the turtle they have captured lying in the bottom of the canoe. An octopus and two queen fish are in the same panel. [177 When, in still weather, these queen fish jump out of the water they cause the

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[501] [95] This is a myth similar to that of *Birikiri* depicted on the engraved paddle, Fig. 58F.

616] [96] Wooden canoes are *jiritja* and bark canoes *dua*. This conforms to the custom of the aborigines of north-eastern Arnhem Land of placing all modern objects in the *jiritja* moiety and the ancient ones in the *dua*. The canoes of the spirit people all have special names.

[551 [97] The aborigines have personal names for themselves, their dogs and their canoes.

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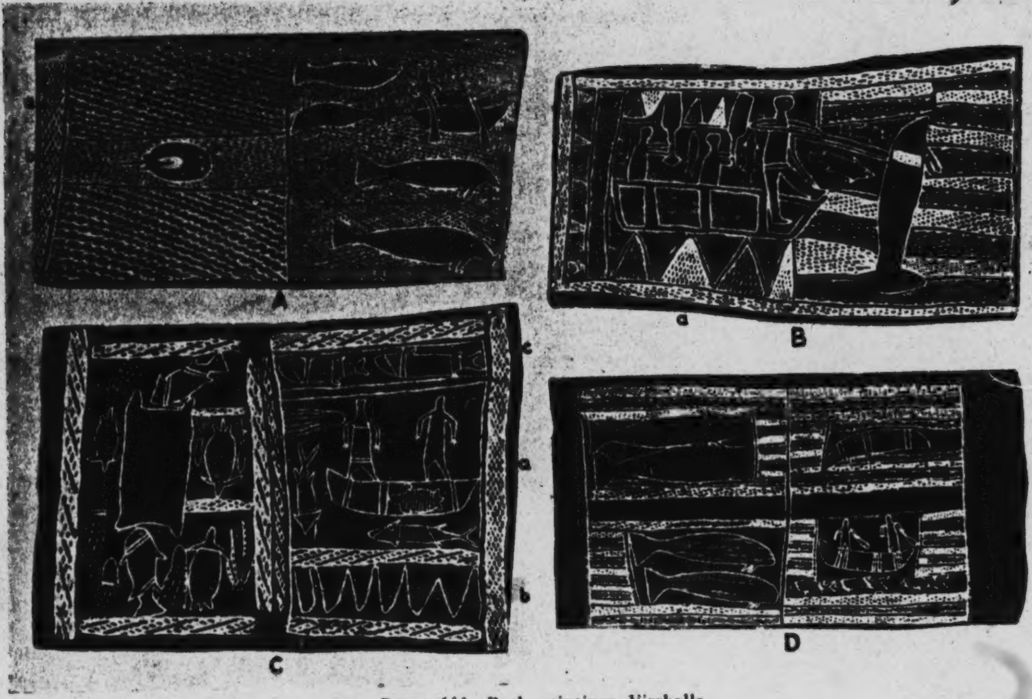

Plate 111. Bark paintings, Yirrkalla
The Mokoi and the turtle hunt

776 *773 *532 clouds to form, shown on panel *b*, and rain to fall. In panel *c* are two more queen fish. The rectangular design in the centre of the left-hand panel is an unidentified place, called Waitjundudu, situated under the water near Cape Arnhem. Near by are two queen fish, three turtles and seven octopi.

### *The Journey of the Mokoi, Birikiri, to Cape Arnhem*

[778] There was once a spirit man (*Mokoi*) called *Birikiri*, who left Nalkuma to capture some dugongs and paddled to the totem place of the *Mokoi* on the southern side of Cape Arnhem. On his arrival *Birikiri* felt tired, so he pulled his canoe up on the beach, lay down on the warm sand and went to sleep. When he awoke he saw, to his dismay, a mortal man, an aboriginal called *Junbulu*, coming toward him. He rushed to his canoe but in his fright became so confused that he had great difficulty in launching it. Finally he succeeded and, paddling through the rough breakers, reached Nalkuma in safety.

Figure 58F, G illustrates both the obverse and reverse sides of the engraved paddle.

In panel *b* of F is *Birikiri* who, having just arrived from Nalkuma, has pulled his canoe up on the beach, the cross-hatched panel below. Above the canoe is *Birikiri* asleep on the sand, the sand being indicated by the long rectangle beneath him. There are six octopi, called *kwidilir*, in panel *a*. Cross-hatched transverse panels, *c*, *d*, *e*, and the area *o*, represent the stormy water through which *Birikiri* paddled his canoe to escape from *Junbulu*. At *r*, the triangular designs are clouds left in the sky by the *Mokoi*.

The reverse side of the paddle, G, deals with some of the totemic creatures associated with Cape Arnhem, all of which have become natural features. In the centre of panel *d* is a devil-ray with octopi on either side. There is a queen fish above and below. The hump-backed whale, *morokundja*, is in panel *e*, [825] surrounded by four octopi. These octopi are the friends of both the whale and the devil-ray. Transverse panels *a*, *b* and *c* refer to the stormy seas through which the *Mokoi* paddled and the short lines around the border of the paddle, reefs some distance from the shore.

### Totem Creatures

*773 778 825 *532 Three bark paintings and three decorated paddles illustrate one or more of the totem creatures of Cape Arnhem.

### *The Totemic Creatures at Marawina, near Cape Arnhem*

The upper cross-hatched panel of Pl. 106B[98] is the open sea. Below, at *a*, is the devil-ray, *mulara*, and his friends, the octopi, *mainda*. At *b* is the constellation of Tjirilpan, Orion and the Pleiades,[99] with a rock cod, *kouper*, on each side of the constellation. In panels *c* and *d* are six clouds. Rain is falling from the two clouds on the right. In the bottom left-hand panel, *e*, is a crocodile,

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[98] Interpretation by F. M. Setzler.

[99] See astronomy, Pl. 157D.

*773 *Wabula* caught her by the wrist and, carrying her to his bark hut in the forest, blocked up all the openings so that she could not escape.

825 The girl, *Bounba*, afraid and lonely, cried all the night for her father, *Jumundik*,[11] to help her. He, being a skilled magician, had a spear-thrower with which he could perform many wonders. The first time he rubbed it, a heavy wind sprang up which shook the bark hut so much that cracks appeared everywhere. By rubbing his spear-thrower the second time, *Jumundik* transformed his daughter into a butterfly so small that she was able to escape through one of those cracks.

When *Wabula* awoke in the morning and found that *Bounba* had escaped, he changed himself into a hawk, so that he could live in the same element as the girl.

*773 *532 Plate 113A pictures the story of the hawk-man, *Wabula*, and the butterfly girl, *Bounba*. In the upper left-hand corner, at *a*, the eldest sister is resting within her hut, shown as a crescent. The five human figures immediately below are her brothers and sisters of varying ages, the upper two being infants. The designs on the left lower edge, at *b*, are the lobsters, *maitka*, which *Wabula* caught to entice the girl from her hut. Reading from the left, the first three and the sixth are complete lobsters, the fourth has its claws removed, and the fifth is the parcel of cooked lobsters which *Wabula* wrapped in paper-bark to give *Bounba*. Immediately to the right of number six is the man, *Wabula*, taking hold of the wrist of the girl, *Bounba*, as she reached for the parcel of lobsters.

Within the triangle on the upper right, at *d*, is the bark hut of *Wabula*, in which the hawk-man (upper) and the butterfly-girl (lower) are asleep. On the lower right at *c* is the girl's father, *Jumundik*, rubbing his special spear-thrower. This spear-thrower not only created the storm which caused the openings in *Wabula*'s bark hut (one is shown as a dark line on the left-hand side of the hut), but also transformed his daughter into a butterfly so that she could escape.

*Wabula* is depicted as a hawk on the upper right of the painting and *Bounba* as a butterfly immediately below him.

### *The Echidna-man, Tjisamuna, and the Plovers, Tjutju*

One day, a long, long time ago, a flock of plover-men, *Tjutju* (*Lobibyx miles*), were hunting in the forest a few miles south of Port Bradshaw when they saw their enemy, the echidna-man, *Tjisamuna* (*Echidna aculeata*), and his wives asleep beside their camp-fire. Taking advantage of this, the plover-men sneaked up quietly and threw so many spears into the body of the echidna-man that he died. Next morning, however, *Tjisamuna* returned to life and, seeing that the spears of the plovers had grown into his skin, he transformed himself into an echidna. When the plover-men, *Tjutju*, saw what a grotesque, clumsy creature their enemy, *Tjisamuna*, had become (see sketch of an echidna, Pl. 62C), they

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● [779] [11] *Jumundik* is also in charge of the *dua* heaven, Djhala, of the Milingimbi people, p. 330. The link between *Bounba*, the morning star, *barnumbir*, and the *dua* heaven is of interest.

more expert they experimented with the carved figures until at the present time 532*
they are able to produce a creditable representation of the human form (see Pl. 135A, B).

From that time until comparatively recently the *jiritja*[18] men adopted the 764
Macassan custom of using carved grave posts, but only when the body was buried 616
instead of being placed on a platform. When a *jiritja* man died, his moiety asked
a *dua* man to carve a mortuary post to place on the grave.[19] Later, when the 532*
body was disinterred and the burial dances were being performed a *jiritja* man, taking the mortuary post with him, went from camp to camp collecting food for the participants in the burial rituals.[20] At the completion of the meal the post was replaced on the empty grave.

The chief interest of the carved human figures lies in the fact that in a little 532*
over two generations the aborigines, without the help and for most of the time 177
without even the knowledge of the white man, have taken a simple post figure of foreign origin and through improvement of techniques can now carve in wood heads and full-length human figures of considerable merit.

The Rev. F. W. Chaseling, when a missionary at Yirrkalla, was the first to 532*
discover that the aborigines of that locality were carving the human figure in 797
the round. This discovery came about in a curious manner. When King George V 114
died, Chaseling, in one of his sermons, expressed grief at the great loss the nation had suffered. This sermon and the concern of the missionary over the loss of his king so impressed *Mauwulan* that he carved a mortuary post,[21] similar to those used on the *jiritja* graves, but which was supposed to resemble the King. This post *Mauwulan* presented to the missionary so that he would be reminded of his dead monarch. Chaseling, in 1938, realizing the importance of his discovery, presented the mortuary post to the Australian Museum, Sydney. Unfortunately the Museum authorities, unaware that the post was a unique example of aboriginal handicraft, did not describe it in a scientific journal.

I was able to examine this figure early in 1949. It was the head of a bearded man (Pl. 138C, D) cut on the end of a hardwood post about four feet long and five inches in diameter. The face, about five inches long, consisted of eyes, a nose, lips and ears; the ears, however, being somewhat out of position.[22] The body of the pole is decorated with ceremonial string.

I also collected at Yirrkalla a number of human heads carved in wood, most 532*
of them representing spirit people or *Mokoi* who live in the surrounding jungles 776●
and eucalyptus forests.

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[18] This was because the aborigines made *Bopalindi* a member of the *jiritja* moiety.

[19] According to Warner (1937), p. 434, at Milingimbi burial posts are placed on the graves.

[20] Warner (1937), p. 433, describes this food-collecting ritual at Milingimbi, and the Berndts (1949), p. 216, at Yirrkalla.

[21] Warner (1937), p. 504, refers to a burial post being erected on the aboriginal graves at Milingimbi. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 40, record the finding of a burial post figure at the same locality.

[22] I am indebted to the Australian Museum, Sydney, for the photograph of this specimen, E.46535, and the relevant details.

use of steel tools, but acquired for themselves a stock of jungle knives, tomahawks, 532*
wood rasps and files. With these tools the aborigines cut and filed the wooden 177
figures into shape with much dexterity. 322

In sharp contrast to these facts is the account given by Elkin and the Berndts.[27] When describing the manufacture of the carved figures at Yirrkalla, these authors wrote: "The artist chips it [the figure] skilfully with a knife or a broad "shovel-nosed" spear-point. . . . The artist spends several days[28] carving in the details and scraping the surface smooth with a knife blade, rough stone or piece of shark's skin "sand paper".'

As Mr and Mrs Berndt were at Yirrkalla less than a year previous to our arrival (the Air Force camp at that time had not long been disbanded) the aborigines would then have had as many, if not more, steel tools than at the time of our visit. It is not reasonable therefore to expect that the aborigines would have been using the primitive tools reported by Elkin and the Berndts.

### *Tjambuwal, the Thunder-man, and his Ceremonial Objects*

Two figures of the mythical thunder-man, *Tjambuwal*, were collected, Pl. 776●
130A, B, and Pl. 130E, F; myth, p. 282.

Associated with these carved figures are five ceremonial objects used in the 778
*dua* ceremonies of the thunder-man. They are: the club, *burungunda* (Pl. 130D), 532*
with which *Tjambuwal* strikes the cliff; the spear, *larapan* (Pl. 130J), with which he spears the rock cod, *akurata*; the club, *barlait* (Pl. 130C), with which he kills the fish; the ceremonial object, *munan* (Pl. 130G, H), symbolizing the loops of clouds, *wulmu*, belonging to the thunder-man; and the yam, *bualku or bawal* (Pl. 131E) created from the fragments of the club, *burungunda*.

The symbolism of the designs on the *Tjambuwal* figure, Pl. 130A, B, refers 773*
to the time when, at the beginning of the wet season, he strikes the cliffs at
Jalboa headland (Pl. 91E) with his club and throws the white stones, *milarik* 532*
(Pl. 91F) into the sky. These stones quickly increase in size until they become large cumulus clouds, in which *Tjambuwal* travels from place to place.

The two lines meeting at an angle across the front of the figure (Pl. 130B), and the diagonal lines across the back, symbolize crevices which *Tjambuwal* made in Jalboa headland when he struck it with his club, *burungunda* (Pl. 130D). The vertical lines on the back of the head (Pl. 130A) symbolize falling rain, and the arc-shaped panels on both the back and the front of the figure, the gutters in the distorted rock strata of the cliffs at Jalboa, which were supposedly formed when *Tjambuwal* urinated on the cliff.

The symbolism of the designs on the second figure of *Tjambuwal*, illustrated on Pl. 130E, F, is somewhat different. The spots on the diagonal band across the chest of the figure (Pl. 130E) picture the white stones, *milarik*, at Jalboa headland (Pl. 91F). The curving lines to the right of this band are cumulus clouds,

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[27] Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 49.

[28] The more expert of the aboriginal craftsmen I saw in 1948 were able to complete and paint a human figure in about seven hours, and a carved head in four.

[text continues on p 421]

another yam, *banumin*. But each woman became so engrossed in her own dance that she forgot about the other, and travelled in a different direction from that of her companion. *Bunbulama* finished her dance at Melville Bay where, in company with her husband, *Wuluwait*,[58] they now entertain the spirits of *dua* dead whilst they are on their way to Purelko.[59] *Muralunangau*, on the other hand, danced her way to Bremer Island. But when *Muralunangau* was making camp she noticed the flowers with which she had decorated herself had all wilted. She became so sad and wept so violently that the sound of her grief caused the *timaru* wind to blow.[60] 532* 773*

At the present time, when the rainy season is nearing its end the women in the camp wail in unison, believing that the sound of their grief, like that of *Muralunangau*, will cause the wet-season wind, *bara*, to stop and the *timaru* wind to blow.[61] [789 821]

The white cap on the head of *Muralunangau*, Pl. 136B, D, indicates the paint used when she decorated herself in readiness for her dance with *Bunbulama*. The yellow face on Pl. 136D is symbolic of the colour of the totemic clay-pan of the woman at Bremer Island. The black rectangle at *a*, Pl. 136B, is *Muralunangau's* carrying-bag. The cross-hatched panels on *Muralunangau's* body indicate falling rain.[62]

*The Winds of Yirrkalla*. *Bara* is a north-westerly *dua* wind which continues throughout the rainy season, extending from November to March. This is a time of scarcity for the aborigines, because the continuous rains, high humidity and heavy storms not only spoil most of the food, but prevent fishing. 132 262

*Timaru*, another *dua* wind, blows from the east-south-east and immediately succeeds the *bara*. The plants start to bear fruit and the underground tubers to mature during the period of this wind. The mythical woman, *Muralunangau*, of Bremer Island was responsible for the first *timaru* wind.[63] As mentioned previously, the aboriginal women endeavour to start the *timaru* wind by means of concerted wailing. [773* 789]

The *jiritja* wind, *lunguruma*, which blows from a northerly direction, is sent to the aborigines of Yirrkalla by the spirits of the *jiritja* 'heaven', Nalkuma. *Lunguruma* brings many coco-nuts, lengths of bamboo and sometimes even Melanesian canoes;[64] all of these are looked upon by the Yirrkalla aborigines as gifts from the spirits of Nalkuma.[65] Food is plentiful during the period of this wind. [776]

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[58] See myth associated with bark figure of *Bunbulama*, Pl. 65C, D.

[59] See myth, journey of *dua* dead, p. 325.

[60] See details of Groote Eylandt winds, p. 94.

[61] The *timaru* is the wind following the wet season, a time of scarcity. It ushers in a period when the fruits start to ripen and the underground tubers mature.

[62] As there is no mention of rain in the myth of *Muralunangau* it is not clear why these designs are painted on her body.

[63] See myth of woman, *Muralunangau*, p. 433.

[64] See carved pipe, p. 300.

[65] Berndt (1948), p. 91, mentions that 'at the time of the north-east winds [no doubt *lunguruma*], just after the wet monsoonal season, coco-nuts, cones, long pods, bread fruit and timber, with an occasional canoe (including some of the outrigger variety) are washed up on the mainland beaches and are said to have been sent by the spirits that inhabit Badu.' Berndt's Badu is my Nalkuma.

*532 The cross-hatching on the back and front of the figure indicates the tunic worn by the woman and the pattern on the legs, the stripes on her short trousers. [415] The central disc is a money bag, held in place by the diagonal strings. The artist has indicated *Jubara's* long hair by a series of vertical lines.

### *The Wuruma Man*

764 Plate 136C illustrates a mortuary post, called *wuruma,* which, according to my informants, is similar to those the visiting Macassan trepangers placed on the *532 graves of their dead.[69] Until recently men of the *jiritja* moiety placed similar [616] posts on the graves of their dead. Both Warner and the Berndts[70] describe some of the customs associated with their use.

### *The Woman, Wurati-laku*

*532 A mythical woman, *Wurati-laku,* who once lived on the Amakula River, *773 Groote Eylandt,[71] became dissatisfied with her surroundings and started on a journey round the island. She camped at many places, at the Angoroko River, at Amalipa, at north-western Groote Eylandt, at Wangu-garipa, near Umbakumba, at Algirita, Lake Hubert, making her final camp at Natira, near Central Hill. Each of her camps became extensive outcrops of rocky boulders. *Wurati-laku,* afraid lest men other than her husband might see her, always ran away on their approach, covering herself with a sheet of bark. Until recently the women of Groote Eylandt copied the actions of the mythical woman, *Wurati-laku.* Whenever a strange man approached the camp they ran away, holding around their bodies sheets of hinged bark, called *inukumba.*[72]

Plate 135C, D illustrates the carved figure of *Wurati-laku,* the designs on the body representing those painted on the hinged sheet of bark, *inukumba,* which she always carried. The dots on her head represent the flower, *latulat,* she placed in her hair.

### *The Spirit Woman, Wulu-wulu*

● 776 A number of these spirit women, or *Mokoi, Wulu-wulu,* live with a male *532 *Mokoi, Kultana,* in the Gurila jungle, near Port Bradshaw. The *Wulu-wulu* assist the spirits of the *jiritja* dead on their journey to the *jiritja* 'heaven', [775] Nalkuma,[73] by giving them as a passport the bean of a *menin* vine.

The central line on the carved figure of *Wulu-wulu,* Pl. 135E, is the trunk of the *menin* vine, the diagonals, the branches, and the ovals within the diagonals, the bean, *gurung-guru,*[74] which *Wulu-wulu* gives to the travelling spirits of the dead.

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[69] See origin of carved figures, p. 416.

[70] Warner (1937), p. 431; Berndts (1949), p. 216.

[71] See map, Fig. 4.

[72] Tindale (1925), p. 71, mentions the strict seclusion of the aboriginal women at Groote Eylandt.

[73] Bark painting, Pl. 100D.

[74] Pl. 100A.

## CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

### *The Mosquito Sacred Object*

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Plate 132D is a sacred object of the mosquito totem of Milingimbi. It belongs 778 to the *dua narra* ceremonies. Collected by F. M. Setzler.

## 3. CARVED AND PAINTED HUMAN HEADS

### *The Two Brothers, Bauaramin and Wururunga*

The two brothers, *Bauaramin*[78] and *Wururunga*, set out to kill their enemy, 628 *Djunmundia*, who had previously murdered their father.[79] 532+

Plate 139D, E, A, H illustrates the carved heads of the two brothers, *Bauaramin* and *Wururunga*. 773+

The designs on the face of *Bauaramin*, Pl. 139D, E, and the white line down the nose; which represents the deadly tiger-snake, *dunbania*, are always painted on the face of the aborigines when they are setting out on an avenging expedition. [302] They are known as the 'death-marks'.[80] The darker cross-hatched panels on the side of the head, Pl. 139D, indicate the base of the thunder-clouds, and the lighter coloured ones, their white tops.

The white dots on the face of *Wururunga*, Pl. 139H, are hail-stones, *milarik*, and the hole at the base of the nose, an attempt to represent a skull, for *Wururunga* has long since been dead.

On the side of the head of *Wururunga*, Pl. 139A, the darker cross-hatched panel represents falling rain, and the lighter coloured ones a hail-storm. The white dots on the side of the head also indicate hail-stones. When these hail-stones fall to the ground in *dua* territory they are sometimes transformed into white stones, *milarik*.[81] The dots on the neck are falling rain, and the white cap, the tops of cumulus clouds.

### *The Spirit Man, Duwuliana*

This *dua Mokoi*, *Duwuliana*, lives in a forest at Arnhem Bay. As his only 776 food is the honey of the wild bees, he carries only a honey basket.[82] 260

At the beginning of the dry season the basket is clean, having been well washed by the heavy storms of the wet season. As the dry season advances the basket becomes progressively darker in colour, due to the accumulated honey and dirt, for *Duwuliana* is a careless fellow who never washes his honey basket, knowing that the next wet season will save him the trouble. At the beginning of the dry season the honey in the hives in the trees is a golden-yellow in colour, but it gradually darkens and becomes less pleasant to eat as the season advances. The aborigines blame *Duwuliana* for this change, claiming that if he were more cleanly and washed his basket regularly they would always have clear golden honey.

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[78] In the myth of the bark painting, Pl. 98A, *Bauaramin* is called *Tjuna-tjuna*.

[79] See myth of *Tjuna-tjuna* and *Wururunga*, p. 303.

[80] See myth, p. 305.

[81] See the white stones, *milarik*, at the totem place of the thunder-man at Jalboa, Pl. 91F. [285

[82] A tightly woven basket which will hold honey.

415]

### CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

The designs on the head of *Duwuliana*, Pl. 139B, C, all refer to rain, hail and thunder-clouds. The dots on the face of B are hail-stones, and the cross-hatched panel across the forehead, small clouds. On the side of the head, Pl. 139C, the cross-hatched panels indicate falling rain, and the white crown, the tops of cumulus clouds. 532* 776 778

### *The Baijini Man, Tankupou*

Plate 139F, G pictures the carved head of a *Baijini* man, *Tankupou*, who once lived at Port Bradshaw.[83] The black rectangle on the forehead, Pl. 139F, is the pillow of *Tankupou*, and the cross-hatched panel beneath, the pillow-slip. The designs on Pl. 139G all refer to the cotton goods owned by the *Baijini*, and the vertical lines on the neck to the posts of the *Baijini* house. 177 773* 532*

### *The Baijini Man, Gurumuluna*

*Gurumuluna* was the head man of the *Baijini* visitors to Port Bradshaw. He is now included in the pantheon of mythical beings who created the topography of Port Bradshaw. [776]

Plate 140A, B, C pictures the carved head of *Gurumuluna*. The designs on the forehead, Pl. 140B, indicate a distinguishing badge which, according to my informants, is similar to that worn by a ship's captain. The two triangles in front of the ear, Pl. 140C, are the cotton sheets for *Gurumuluna's* bed, and the cross-hatched rectangle in the same position on Pl. 140A, his pillow. The cross-hatched triangles on the top of the head and behind the ears represent the roof of the house of the *Baijini*, which was constructed of bamboo rafters and palm-tree thatch. The parallel vertical lines on the neck refer to the upright posts of the house.

### *The Spirit Man, Jindjaraui*

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The spirit man, *Jindjaraui*, lives on the shores of a swamp west of Arnhem Bay. This *Mokoi* carries a long steel knife in his hair which, when he strikes it, gives off a clear bell-like note. This sound guides the *jiritja* spirits of the dead belonging to the Arnhem Bay area to *Jindjaraui's* camp, one of the *jiritja* 'heavens'.[84] 773* 776 [775]

Plate 139J, K illustrates the carved head of the *Mokoi*, *Jindjaraui*. The dark-coloured triangle above the ear on Pl. 139K is the blade of the steel knife the *Mokoi* carries in his hair and the cross-hatched rectangle below, its handle. The cross-hatching on either side of the knife indicates clouds and the dots on the top

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[83] For more complete details of the *Baijini* myth, see p. 333.

[84] Berndt (1948), p. 94, claims that the spirits of the *jiritja* dead from Yirrkalla go to Badu (Mulgrave Island) in the Torres Straits. He, however, refers to fifteen other names for the *jiritja* heaven. Although my *jiritja* informants from Yirrkalla stated emphatically that their spirits went to Nalkuma (p. 331), not to Badu, and I did not obtain such a large number of designations for the *jiritja* home of the dead as did Berndt, the myth associated with *Jindjaraui* indicates that there is more than one *jiritja* heaven. The *dua* moiety at Yirrkalla, on the other hand, refer to only one heaven, i.e. Purelko (myth, p. 325), although the *dua* moiety of Milingimbi call their land of the dead Djirais. [114] 775

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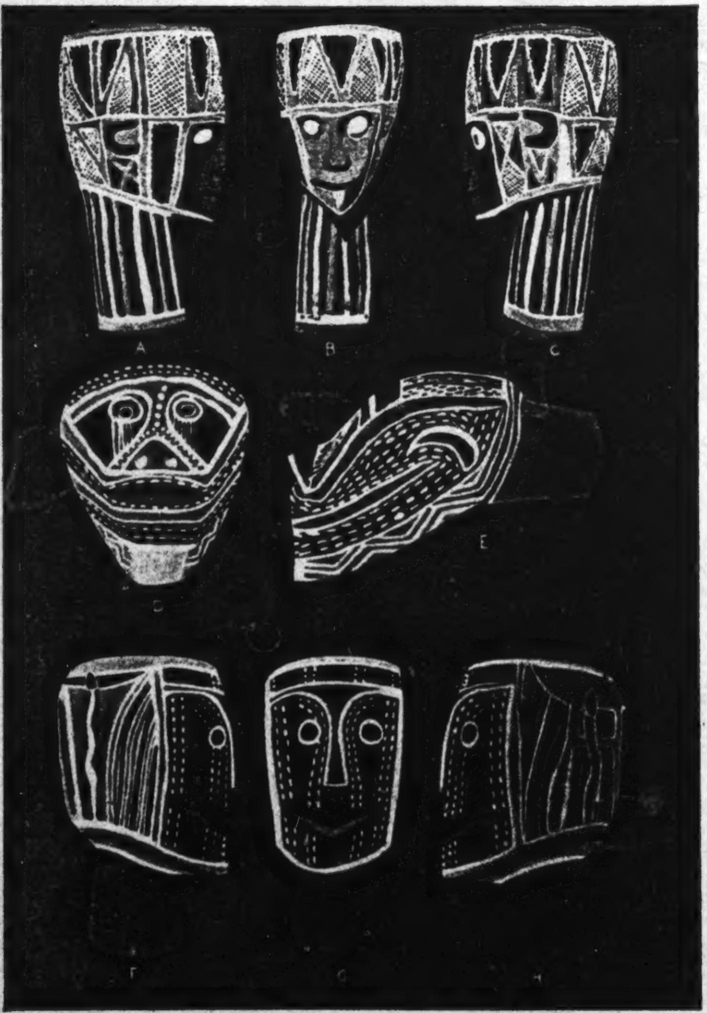

**Plate 140.** Carved and painted figures, Yirrkalla

A, B C The Baijini, Gurumuluna D, E The woman, Urapali
F, G, H The Mokol, Wulu-wulu

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of the head, falling rain. The cross-hatched band across the forehead on Pl. 139J 773*
depicts the falling rain running down the face of the *Mokoi*. 776

### *The Spirit Woman, Urapali*

There is a spirit woman, or *Mokoi*, called *Urapali*, at Blue Mud Bay who, 776
when she took part in a burial ceremony, stabbed herself on the face and head 764
with a sharpened bone in the same manner as do aboriginal women today on 532*
the death of one of their near relatives. *Urapali* still carries the marks both of
the wounds and the blood which flowed from them.

Plate 140D, E illustrates the carved head of *Urapali*. On Pl. 140D the two groups of parallel lines under the eyes are tears she shed in her grief and the dots across the forehead and on the face, the self-inflicted wounds.

On Pl. 140E the white dots on the top of the head and along the side of the face indicate the places where *Urapali* wounded herself, and the meandering line along the lower jaw, the blood which flowed from those wounds.

### *The Spirit Man, Wulu-wulu*

The spirit man, *Wulu-wulu*,[85] a *Mokoi* with a particularly dark skin, is 776
associated in some undetermined manner with the *bilumbira* serpent of Cape 532*
Arnhem.

Plate 140F, G, H illustrates the carved head of *Wulu-wulu*.

On Pl. 140G the white dots on the dark face of the *Mokoi* represent falling rain. The serpent, *bilumbira*, occupies the central position on Pl. 140F. The dark crescent at *bilumbira's* head indicates cirrus clouds; the light ground behind, the cumulus cloud in which the serpent travels; and the curving parallel lines on either side, falling rain.

On the opposite side of the head, Pl. 140H, is the serpent with its head in a cirrus cloud. The dark-coloured square immediately below the cloud is the totemic place at Cape Arnhem, where *bilumbira* lives in the trees.[86] The curving parallel lines in this panel indicate falling rain.

## 4. HUMAN FIGURES IN BARK

The aborigines at Yirrkalla make simple human figures by binding the soft 532*
bark of the paper-bark tree with string.[87] These bark figures are exhibited in some non-secret ceremonies, such as those of the *dua* spirit people (*Mokoi*),

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[85] It is possible that a fuller investigation would reveal the existence of *Wulu-wulu* men and women in a number of *jiritja* localities around Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw. See myth of *Wulu-wulu* women, p. 343, also bark painting, Pl. 109A.

[86] Myth, p. 351.

[87] Kaudern (1944), p. 300, records similar bark figures made by the natives of the Celebes to represent themselves and thus confuse the evil spirits. Worms (1942), Fig. 6, illustrates a similar bark figure associated with the Goranara ceremonies of north-western Australia. [171]

*532 *Bunbulama* and her brother, *Wuluwait*. Bark figures are also used in the burial [764] ceremonies, where they are used to represent children. They are placed beside the corpse so that it will not be lonely.

*532 778 *773 The figures of *Bunbulama* and *Wuluwait* have leaves and rushes stuck in the head for hair. In the bark painting, Pl. 91C, these represent the swamp grass in the rain-making bundles. Except for this, all the bark figures in my collection were similar in appearance. For that reason the figures of *Bunbulama* and *Wuluwait* only are illustrated.

The myths associated with the bark painting, Pl. 94C, the carved figure, Pl. 133A, B, and the bark figures, Fig. 65C, D, suggest that the myth of the *Mokoi*, *Bunbulama* and her brother *Wuluwait* covers two different activities. In the myth of the bark painting and the carved figure, the activities of the two *Mokoi* centre on rain-making. In the myth of the bark figure their chief function is to entertain the *dua* spirits of the dead on their journey from earth to their heaven, Purelko.

*773 ●776 The *Mokoi*, *Bunbulama* and her brother *Wuluwait*, live in a jungle called Mumulkara, on the western shores of Melville Bay. In the early days *Wuluwait* was a good hunter of turtles. One day, when out in his canoe, he sighted a particularly large *dua* turtle floating on the water, but in spite of all his care he could not get close enough to spear it. Disappointed, *Wuluwait* returned and told *Bunbulama* about his bad luck. She persuaded him not to be worried about the loss of the turtle because, as there was always plenty of food on the sea coast and in the surrounding jungle, she would be able to collect sufficient food for them both. From then until now the woman, *Bunbulama*, has provided the food.

[775 616] At the present time, however, it is the duty of these two *Mokoi* to entertain the *dua* spirits of the dead during the first evening of their journey to the *dua* heaven, Purelko. When it becomes dark the woman, *Bunbulama*, returning from the jungle with a bundle of red blossoms called *banamin*,[88] asks her brother to blow his drone tube, so that the travelling spirits will find *Bunbulama's* camp. When they arrive, everyone spends the hours of darkness in dance and ceremony, carrying in their hands the flowers gathered by *Bunbulama*.[89] As daylight approaches, the *dua* spirits of the dead depart on the next stage of their journey to Purelko, via Dambalia (Bremer Island), and the brother and sister go back into the dense jungle so that none of the aborigines can see them.

[*532] Figure 65C illustrates the bark figure of the woman, *Bunbulama*; Fig. 65D, her brother *Wuluwait*. Both figures have grass stuck in their head and a projection from the chin which represents a beard.[90]

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[88] In another myth, this flower is called *wakuwa-nani*, p. 327.

[89] See myth of journey of the *dua* dead, p. 325.

[90] My informants stated that the woman, *Bunbulama*, wore a beard, similar to that of her brother. This beard, however, is not shown on the bark painting of these two people, Pl. 91C.

## CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

### (1) YIRRKALLA

### *The Green Turtle, Gariwa*

In creation times, when the *dua* green turtle, *gariwa*, and the *jiritja* hawksbill turtle, *kouwaradji*, were men, they lived together on the beach at Yirrkalla. One day, when the two men were discussing some trivial matter, the hawksbill man lost his temper and speared the green-turtle man. The wounded man was so enraged over this unjustified attack that he changed himself into the green turtle. His totemic place is now at the bottom of the sea, between Yirrkalla and Bremer Island.[1] 532* 773* [823 778]

Plate 141A, B, E is two carved figures, in the round, of the present-day green turtle, *gariwa*. The designs on the back represent the shell pattern of the carapace.

### *The Serpent, Wununga*

This staff, from Milingimbi, represents *wununga*, the mythical serpent, whose voice is the sound of the log gong, *uvar*.[2] This serpent, also called *muit*,[3] lives in a large waterhole at Milingimbi. The staff is used in the *narra* rituals. [534]

The main design on Pl. 134A is the mythical serpent, *wununga*; the smaller designs are young snakes, the progeny of *wununga*. No explanation was obtained for the chevron designs on the upper part of the staff. Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

### *The Night-bird, Karawak, and the Opossum, Marungo*

The night-bird, *karawak*, is associated in some undetermined way with the *Mokoi* of the dead.[4] In another mythological story[5] *karawak* (probably one of the owls) was friends with the opossum, *marungo*. [776]

*The Ceremonial Staff.* This staff, Pl. 134E, is used in the totemic ceremonies of the night-bird, *karawak*. It represents a totemic tree near Cape Shields, on which *karawak* sat to talk to the opossum. The carved figure on the top is the night-bird. The same design is repeated lower down. The wavy lines have the same meaning as those on the bark painting of *marungo* and *karawak*,[6] i.e, the marks made by the opossum as it wandered round the base of the totemic tree where *karawak* was perched. 532* 773* 778

### *The Shark, Mana, at Blue Mud Bay*

For myth, see p. 372.

*The Carved Figure.* On Pl. 132A the series of rectangles means the same as those on the bark painting of the shark, *mana*,[7] i.e. dead palm leaves floating

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[1] See painted coffin of turtle-man, *Gariwa*, Pl. 102B, D.

[2] See log gong, Pl. 147A, C; also Warner (1937), p. 314.

[3] The serpent *muit* which, in the myth of the *gunabibi* ceremony at Milingimbi, swallowed the *Wawalik* sister, although considered by some to be more powerful than *julunggul*, is really the same mythical creature (see Warner, 1937, p. 372).

[4] Myth, p. 312.

[5] Bark paintings, Pl. 115E; also engraved ceremonial message sticks, Fig. 65A, B.

[6] Myth, p. 302.

[7] This is the symbolism employed on the bark painting of *mana*, Pl. 119B.

## 7. DECORATED IMPLEMENTS AND WEAPONS

*532 171 The aborigines of Australia gain much pleasure from the painting of their implements and weapons. The painted shields of Queensland[12] and the engraved boomerangs of northern New South Wales[13] are typical examples.

[517] In Arnhem Land, where neither the shield nor the boomerang is used, it is the paddles and the spear-throwers which receive the attention of the artists. Warner[14] records that among the aborigines of Milingimbi, 'although the paints dissolve immediately in water, the natives often paint their paddles for the mere pleasure of decorating them and seeing their beauty.' The natives of Groote Eylandt and Yirrkalla paint both their spear-throwers and their paddles. At the latter place the blades of many of the paddles are covered with engraved or painted designs of totemic significance.

### (1) Paddles from Yirrkalla

### *The Spirit Men, Maranatuer and Bunjinkum*

*773 776 ● Two brothers, *Maranatuer* and *Bunjinkum*, noted fishermen and hunters, once lived at Jumbara-pinja, a locality on the Pali-pali River which runs into Arnhem Bay.[15] One day the two *Mokoi* speared a particularly large *dua* turtle called *talibo* (possibly a logger-head),[16] which was so powerful that it towed them far out to sea before they were able to haul the turtle close enough to the canoe to kill it. This accomplished, they paddled back to their camp at Jumbara-pinja, disembowelled the creature and put it on the fire to cook.

[132 221] Whilst they were waiting, *Maranatuer* looked toward the south and saw the dry-season wind, *timaru*, coming toward them. They were just congratulating each other about this, for the period of the *timaru* wind is the season of maturing fruits and underground tubers, when *Bunjinkum*, looking in the opposite direction, saw *Tjambuwal*, of the wet-season wind, *bara*, approaching. Not wishing to be caught between the two winds the brothers hastily ate the turtle, embarked in their canoe and paddled to Jarkala, an island midway between Elcho and the Wessels. Then, hearing that two other *Mokoi*, *Gunbiri* and *Kaiamburo*, friends of theirs, were living on an adjacent island, the brothers left Jarkala and went to stay with them. The four *Mokoi* still live on that island, although no aborigines have ever seen them.

*532 *773 776 Plate 144C, D is the obverse and reverse sides of the paddle.

The central vertical panel on Pl. 144C is the River Pali-pali, at Arnhem Bay, along which the brothers paddled their canoe when they were setting out to catch a turtle. The cross-hatched transverse bands on either side of the river indicate the rocks and sand-banks in its bed.

In the middle of Pl. 144D is the canoe and its occupants, *Maranatuer* being at the top and *Bunjinkum* at the bottom. The dark-coloured bands in panel *a*

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[12] McConnel (1935), pp. 49-68.

[13] Davidson (1937), p. 23.

[14] Warner (1937), p. 492.

[15] Map, Fig. 57.

[136] [16] The logger-head turtle (*Caretta caretta*) is known to have reached the weight of two tons.

[text continues on p. 450 452]

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represent rocks, the light ones the sea breaking over them. In panel *b* the bands have a similar meaning, the darker being large rocks under which the turtles shelter, and the lighter ones the breaking waves.

### *The Spirit People, Balu-balu*

Two *dua* spirit people, or *Mokoi*, a man and his sister, called the *Balu-balu*, once lived on Bungara Island, which is situated between Woodah Island and the shores of Blue Mud Bay.[17] One day, when the man was out in his canoe, called *Baratja*,[18] he saw a particularly large fish but, being over-anxious, did not take sufficient care and the fish escaped. He returned to camp and told his sister about his misfortunes. She sympathized with him and suggested that, perhaps, if next time they both went out in the canoe they might have better luck, and so it happened, for they caught a *dua* green turtle, *gariwa*. Putting the turtle into their canoe, they took it with them to Purelko, the *dua* home of the dead, where they cooked and ate it in the company of other *Mokoi*.

As their turtle rope was becoming rotten the *Balu-balu* decided to make a new one.[19] The woman collected and shredded a large quantity of bark which the man twisted into a rope. When finished it was so long that when one end was at Purelko the other reached Bungara Island. Since that time the brother and sister set out every morning for Bungara Island to catch a *dua* turtle and take it back to Purelko to be cooked and shared with the other *Mokoi*.

Although the aborigines claim they have often seen the marks of the *Balu-balu's* canoe on the shore at Bungara Island, none has ever seen these spirit people.

Plate 144E, F shows the obverse and reverse side of the paddle.

On panel *a* of E is a group of sea-urchins, *jatin*, the food of the green turtles, *gariwa*. The spirit canoe, *Baratja*, of the *Balu-balu*, is in panel *b*. Within the canoe is the green turtle the *Mokoi* are taking to Purelko. Below the canoe is another turtle and, on either side, two harmless *dua* sea snakes, called *jalu*.

The reverse side, F, panel *b*, is occupied by a green turtle and two *jalu* snakes. In panel *a* is another *dua* turtle, two sea snakes and some sea-urchins.

### *The Dua Totem Creatures of Melville Bay*

When the dolphins *injipana* and *bulanbir* were men, they shifted their camp from Arnhem Bay to Waupili, at Melville Bay, to be present at a ceremony in which all the green-turtle and dolphin men took part. Whilst this was going on a *Mokoi*, on his way to Purelko, speared one of the participants, called *Madapang*. This attack gave everyone such a fright that both the dolphin and the turtle men went into the water and became sea creatures. The body of the

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[17] Map, Fig. 1.

[18] The spirits of the *jiritja* 'heaven' also have a special name for the canoe in which they catch dugong at Cape Arnhem, p. 316.

[19] Turtle rope is made from twisted strands of bark; Tindale (1926), p. 115, describes the method of manufacture.

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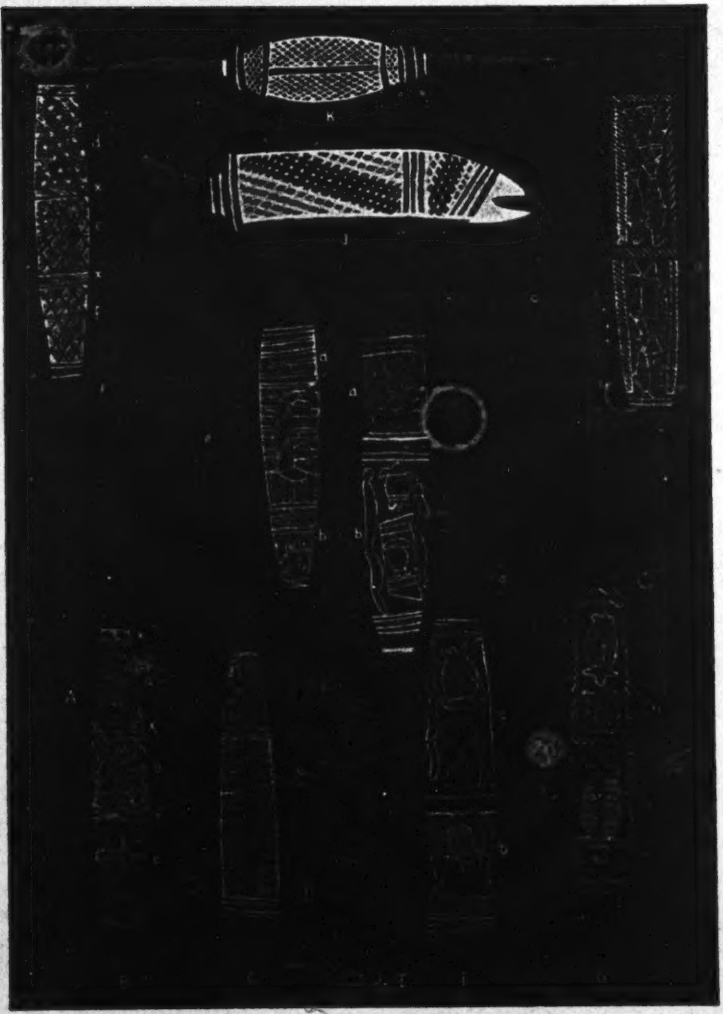

PLATE 144. Carved figures, painted paddles and ceremonial objects

A, B. The tortoise, mimala
E, F The Mokoi, Balu-balu
J Fish, unidentified

C, D The Mokoi, Maranatuer and Bunjinkum
G, H Dua creatures of Melville Bay
K The goanna, bija

*532 The body of the
*773 murdered turtle man, *Madapang*, is now a large rock on the mainland opposite
●776 Bremer Island.

[778 Plate 144G, H shows the obverse and reverse sides of the paddle.

823] The upper panel on the reverse side, G, is occupied by the *dua* green turtle, *gariwa*, and the lower by a similar but larger turtle, *madapang*. The latter is the turtle who, when a man, was killed by the *Mokoi* at Melville Bay. The short transverse panels of cross-hatching near the head and tail of the turtle, *madapang*, indicate seaweed, the food of the creature, and the long panels on either side, the sea.

In the upper panel of the obverse side, H, are five dolphins, called *injipana*, and in the lower, five dolphins of a different species, called *bulanbir*. The cross-hatched panels indicate smooth sea water at the totemic place.

The panels at the head of the upper turtle indicate where the reptile dug in the sand to lay its eggs; the long panels on either side represent sea-water. The rounded end of the paddle indicates that it belongs to a man of the *dua* moiety.[20]

### (2) Painted Paddles and Spear-throwers from Groote Eylandt

171 On Pl. 145 are four paddles from Groote Eylandt, A, B, C, D and E.

No interpretations were gathered of the various designs painted on the paddles. In the upper panel of Pl. 145A is the figure of a man associated with what appears to be a wind symbol,[21] on Pl. 145D a dugong and a turtle, and on Pl. 145E another dugong. Collected by F. D. McCarthy.

On Pl. 146 are four spear-throwers from Groote Eylandt, A, B and C, D and E, and F. Although, as with the paddles, no interpretations were gathered, it is possible to distinguish a dolphin on D, and a turtle and possibly a bandicoot on E. Collected by F. M. Setzler.

### (3) The Log Gongs

172 Two log gongs were collected in Arnhem Land, one (Pl. 147A, C) called
534 *uvar*, by F. M. Setzler and F. D. McCarthy, whilst engaged on archaeological research at Milingimbi, and one (Pl. 147D) called *ubara*, by myself, at Oenpelli.

Warner, when carrying out research among the aborigines of Milingimbi
796 during 1927-8, saw the log gong in use and gives a full description of its
534 function.[22] According to him, the gong, which is beaten with a frayed section of pandanus root, is used only in the *ulmark* cycle of ceremonies. When the women hear the sound of the gong, which they believe is the voice of the serpent
[789] *muit*,[23] they assemble in the camp and continuously repeat the call, *kait-bo*. This call protects the women from harm, it being the same as that used by the

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[20] For shape of a *jiritja* paddle, Fig. 58A, B.

[21] Bark painting of south-east wind, Pl. 24D.

[22] Warner (1937), pp. 315-16.

[23] Another name for *julunggur*, the mythical serpent, who swallowed the *Wawalik* sisters see myth, p. 278, and Warner (1937), p. 372).

[text continues on p. 456]

### GROUP I

*The Sacred Figures and Their Background.*

532 The figures under discussion here belong to both moieties. The *'Wauwəlak*
616 Sisters[9] are *'du:a*—the more conservative of the two moieties, while *'Laintʃuŋ* and
778 *'Banaitʃa* are *'jiritʃa*—the moiety that concerns itself to a great extent with introduced beliefs and customs.

The *'Wauwəlak* are two " Dreaming "[10] Sisters, associated with the *'dʒuŋgəwən*,
●776 *'kunapipi* and *'ŋu:rlmą:k* ceremonies, which are age-grading and seasonal festivals
773 of the *'du:a 'ŋa:ra* (i.e. " shade " or shelter).[11] Their mythology and their song cycle are preoccupied with after-birth blood, with menstruation, and with giant rock pythons, by one of whom they are swallowed. Although they themselves are looked on as Fertility Mothers,[12] they were originally brought into being by the *'Dʒaŋgəwəl*, the most important of all the Ancestral Beings, who were responsible for the peopling of this coast with the predecessors of the present-day aborigines, and for creating all natural resources. The *'Dʒaŋgəwəl* Sisters, *'Maralaitʃ* and *'Pildʒiwurərəiju*, and *'Dʒaŋgəwəl* himself, travelled from the mythical land of *Bə'ralku*, bringing with them the sacred *'raŋga* objects used in the sacred rituals, in addition to the ceremonies mentioned above. Unfortunately, although carved figures of the *'Dʒaŋgəwəl* are occasionally made, none were used during our period of field work, although all their rituals were observed.

773 Briefly then, the two *'Wauwəlak* Sisters (one younger than the other) came from *'Mu:rwəl* waterhole, in the " Bush " on the mainland below Milingimbi. The elder sister was pregnant, and eventually gave birth to a child ; the after-birth blood was still running as she walked along near this place, accompanied by her sister and carrying the baby. They arrived at a deep well, near which they camped.

A large rock python, living in this well, smelt the blood ; he came out and sprayed out water like rain. The elder sister told the other to make a bark hut, and by the time this was erected, it was dark. The snake then made vivid flashes of lightning, but the Sisters were unaware that this was his doing. Then the snake came out of the waterhole and on to the bank, and slowly moved towards the sisters. When the women saw him coming, the younger sister got up, and began to dance to keep him away. When she was tired, she called to her sister, who then began to dance in her turn. But as the snake still came on, the elder sister called out, " Come on, sister. It's no good for me—my blood is coming out, and he can smell it and he's coming closer." So the younger sister danced. When she was tired the elder sister

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[114] [9] L. Warner (*op. cit.* p. 248 *et seq.*) has given a description of the mythology and ritual of the " Wawilak " Sisters. The version given in this paper differs slightly from this.

[10] *Cf.* the concept of the " Eternal Dreamtime." Their reality is in the past but their spirit is eternal.

[778] [11] Each moiety has a sacred shelter during its ceremonies, adjacent to the dancing ground.

[12] The concept of the Fertility Mother is common in Northern Territory of Australia : *vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, MS. book for publication.

danced again, and the snake came closer. In fear the two sisters retired to their hut, 773
and the monstrous snake coiled around it and put his head through the opening. He sprayed water over them, so that they became slippery and soft for swallowing; then he proceeded to swallow the baby, the mother and finally the younger sister.

This is of course only the main theme; the original version and song cycle is very long and detailed, and instead of the blood from after-birth, it is menstruation blood that attracts the snake.

The *'Wauwəlak* myth and sacred songs are known to both men and women, but 773
the ritual and part of the ceremony is for men only, and is held away from the camp.[13]
However, certain associated ceremonies (e.g. the *'dʒuŋgəwən*) are performed in the 533
main camp, where conventionalized posts are placed to symbolize the *'Wauwəlak* 562
Sisters, around which women dance. In the north-eastern corner of Arnhem Land, as in other parts along the coast, women are acquainted with much of the sacred life, but may not discuss it. It is said that they originally monopolized all sacred ritual and dogma, and relinquished this right only when their ceremonial objects were stolen by the men. There is also an "outside" or secular song-cycle dealing with the ordinary adventures of these two sisters, which is sung in the camp and to which women dance.

But the carved figures illustrated here are used as *'raŋga* objects, in the same 196
way as the sacred *'maraiin* painted and feathered-string-decorated poles of *'Dʒaŋgəwəl*.
These are kept in a temporary storehouse out near the dancing ground, and shown to 778
fully initiated men.[14] The original artist who has made the figure enters the hut; 533
outside, the postulants are sitting or standing with faces turned away. The song-man begins to clap his sticks and the others are led up to look upon the sacred object. Finally, when the singing is completed, the designs on the figure are explained and discussed. At times, during the showing of the object, the figure may be held ritually by an actor who writhes on the ground like the python who swallowed the sisters.

What the *'Dʒaŋgəwəl* is to the *'du:a*, *'Laintʃuŋ*[15] is to the *'jiritʃa*: he is the most 776 ●
important of all the *'jiritʃa* Ancestral Beings, and is highly sacred. He came out of 616
the sea, emerging from the waters like a giant stone from the receding tide, at
*'Du:wən'miliŋwu*, near Blue Mud Bay. His body bore variegated water-marks 773
(*'ra:ŋ*) that formed patterns. In the figure illustrated, the totemic designs (belonging 532
to a number of *'jiritʃa* clans) painted on its body are water-mark patterns.

Now *'Barəma*,[16] a *'jiritʃa* man, saw *'Laintʃuŋ* for the first time as he stood on the 773
beach, leaning on a sacred *'raŋga* yam stick, and was surprised to observe these watermarks.

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[13] This with many details is an enactment of the above myth; i.e. in the *'dʒuŋgəwən* and *'kunapipi*.

[14] Those who have gone through the *'Dʒaŋgəwəl* rituals.

[15] The name *'Laintʃuŋ* means "white cloud from the sea," signified by the white face in the figure illustrated.

[16] Called also *'Bilmələndʒi*, derived from sacred beating-sticks (called *'bilma*).

Full length, 33·5 inches; length from top of head to shoulders, 6·25 inches; 532 778 diameter of head, 5·25 inches; width at shoulders, 4·5 inches.

*Plate I, Figure* 6. The final figure of this group is a representation of a *'Banaitʃa* 532 female. Very little of these women is mentioned in the sacred mythology, but songs do refer to sisters of *'Banaitʃa*. This figure is in the likeness of *'Laintʃuŋ*'s daughter 778 at a place called *'Gu:lɔldʒi* in the *'Dalwɔŋu* country. Her special name is *'Barama*, 773 while her sacred name is *'Bilwana*. She is also called *'Mundamunda*, from her body markings, representing bubbles rising to the surface of fresh water, and *'Mundalwaltun*, which refers to barramundi scales arising from the water.[23] This woman, unlike her father *'Laintʃuŋ*, always hides in the water and never emerges.

The figure is rather carelessly carved, and the designs are coloured yellow and 532 white on a red-ochred background, in the conventional manner. Both back and 778 front of this figure are patterned in the sacred *'Dalwɔŋu* clan design, representing bubbles arising from the water, and water-weed spreading across the surface of the water. The pupils of the eyes are painted black; while a yellow band across the forehead, with vertical white and red lines, is a headband, and other lines represent facial markings in yellow and white.

Artist: *'Li:ɔgɔ'raŋ*, as above.

Full length, 29·5 inches; length from top of head to shoulders, 7·25 inches; diameter of head, 5 inches; width across shoulders, 5·5 inches.

### GROUP 2

### *The Figures and Their Background.*

Male and female *'Kultana*, each known by a variety of names,[24] are associated [776] ● with the *'jiritʃa* conception of the Land of Spirits, to which human beings of this moiety must go after death. The spirits of deceased *'du:a* moiety men and women, 616 irrespective of clan, travel to the fabulous country of *Bɔ'ralku*, the original home of 775 the Great Ancestral Beings, known as the *'Dʒaŋgɔwɔl*, who themselves brought into being the predecessors of the present aborigines.[25] Consistent with their less conservative ideas, the *'jiritʃa* home of the dead is located at *'Ba:du* (or Badu; i.e. Badu Island in the Torres Strait Islands group). It is there, in a land of running spring water, coconut palms, bread fruit, rice and light-skinned people who cut timber and live in stilted houses, that the spirit is said to find eventual repose.

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[23] For *'Banaitʃa* is associated with the barramundi fish.

[24] The man is called also *'Ranjiranji*, *'Iji:wunba*, *'Ma:ldʒidʒi*, *'Wu:rimila*, *'Li:abalgulk*, *'Gɔ:ŋɔraldʒuŋ*, *'Dʒu:piŋa:ma*, *'Kauwu:ŋɔ*, *'Dʒalba:ru*, *'Kundʒɔrɔl*, etc., as well as a number of subsidiary names referring to particular incidents in his existence, e.g. *'Da:ga:dʒi:njalwu:l* (looking around for stingray in the mangroves), *'Jiribuma* (scratching himself after being bitten by mosquitoes), *'Dʒi:mɔ:luŋɔ:rɔrɛ* (coming out into the shallow water of a mangrove swamp, looking for stingray), etc., etc. His wife is also known as *'Wuleiwuli*, *'Danbɔramɔ*, *'Munandilŋa*, *'Kɔ:ŋwɔ:raiŋur*, *'Lanɔrilanɔri*, *'Mu:rhandʒa*, *'Kɔ:ŋlilji'naŋɔ*, *'Kuruŋgur*, *'Malwuŋgitʃ*, *'Meiwada*, *'Dilmi:a*, *'Mara:waldʒiŋani* and *'Murandilŋɔ*, etc.

[25] *'Dʒaŋgɔwɔl* is associated with the concept of the Fertility Mother, which will be discussed in detail later.

776 *'Kultana* belongs to the *'Gumaitʃ'mata* (language) group near Port Bradshaw, but this spirit and his wife seem to have other spheres of influence outside their home
775 territory. For example, *'Kultana* also lives on an island called *'Mɔ:dilya*, north of the Wessells, and lights large fires of grass and " rubbish " to attract spirits of the dead on their way to *'Ba:du*. The male *'Kultana*, when he is not supervising the journeying spirits, hunts for stingray in the shallow waters of the mangrove swamps, and scratches his mosquito bites; while his wife gathers wood, collects jungle-fowl eggs, and generally spends her time in the jungles fringing the beach. There are no actual ceremonies associated with these *'Kultana*, although there is some secular
[533] mortuary dancing; but there are both sacred and camp songs related to their adventures and general behaviour.

*'Murəru:ma* is the " Turtle " Man from Bremer Island (at one time called Melville
776 Island), and is associated with *'du:a 'Ri:rədʒiŋu 'mata* secular and sacred life; he,
773 his wives and his sons, *'Daŋədʒi:ɔna* and *'Wuralwural*, are immortalized particularly
533 in an elaborate song cycle sung in the camp, while *'Murəru:ma* himself plays only a subsidiary part in the sacred songs. However, to the *'Ri:rədʒiŋu* speaking group he is an important being, connected with the principal physical features of their country, which is localized around Yirrkalla. The myth itself deals with his turtle hunting,
773 the murder of his *'jiritʃa 'Wɔnguri* wife (he had other wives, belonging to the *'Lamɔmɔri*, *'Warɔmɔri* and *'Gamaitʃ* speaking clans), and consequent feuds arising from this killing. His wife was killed because she wished to have nothing to do with her husband, refused his sexual attentions, and wanted to return to her own country. He killed her by inserting his knife in her vagina, and slitting her upwards to the throat. A revenge expedition on the part of the dead wife's family succeeded in killing *'Murəru:ma* at Melville Bay, on the mainland.

*'Murəru:ma's* two sons, who were living at Bremer Island, came with their friends to the point of land opposite Bremer, near Yirrkalla; there they saw the spirit of *'Murəru:ma*, but believing him to be a human being they were glad, as they had not heard of his death. Coming close to him, they saw him disappear; and looking out to sea they saw a big rock which they knew must be his spirit. They spoke among themselves, saying that they would avenge his death. The rest of the myth concerns several killings and other details too numerous to present here.

[532] These carved figures, whether they be the realistic or conventionalized (i.e.
778 as the " post " figure, Plate I, Figure 4) representations, are used as *'raŋga* objects, in much the same way as are the sacred (*'maraiin*) painted and feathered-string-decorated
796 poles of *'Dʒaŋgɔwɔl*, *'Laintʃuŋ*, *'Banaitʃa*, *'Wauwɔlak* etc. They are kept in a storehouse near the ritual dancing ground and shown to initiated men.[26] The original artist who has made the figure enters the hut; outside, the postulants sit or stand with averted heads. The song man begins to beat his sticks, and the others are led up to look upon the sacred object. Finally, when the singing is completed, the

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[26] Those who have gone through a series of *'maraiin* ceremonies, but may not yet have been admitted to the viewing of certain sacred *'raŋga*.

775 787 it was not an ordinary fish, but was being used by the child spirit as a means of approaching its prospective father.

774 The Mali is shared by man with the whole of the lesser creation. Every living creature, every tree, the very ground itself has its Mali. There can be no existence apart from this spiritual quality.

775 After death the Birrimbirr, or spirit proper, is believed to pass on to Buralkor, the spirit world, which is believed to exist on this world plane away beyond the sun-rising. In this world there are two regions, one good, the other bad, but the spirit's ultimate destination is in no sense determined on ethical grounds. Reaching Buralkor, the spirit once again becomes clothed in physical form, and life goes on as it is lived here.

### Creation

773 776 In the dim dawn days of the world, previous to the existence of men and women as they are found to-day, the world was peopled by a race of semi-human, semi-animal creatures, who were intimately concerned with the origin of the social and ceremonial life of the people. Some of the descendants of these creatures developed into purely animal forms, and others into humans, and many of the "bungals," or open ceremonies, of the people consist of a dramatic recounting of their doings. Behind these there existed certain demi-gods, who were the agents of creation and the ancestors of the present tribal groups. From them the various ceremonial totems were received, and by them the social organisation was established.

Back of these again is the hazy conception of a great spirit known as "Wungarr," by whom the actual agents of creation are believed to have been commissioned and sent forth. The term "Wungarr" is also applied to the dream days of pre-history. By far the most important of these beliefs are those which centre round "Kaitchalan," who is conceived of as a great serpent inhabiting a pool in the upper reaches of the Woolen River. This great creature is believed to have devoured two women who were the most important of the agents of creation, so usurping their powers, and making himself the originator of tribal organisation, social laws and customs, and ceremonial life.

776 Although regarded as in a special sense the ancestor of a certain totemic group of hordes, the power and influence of Kaitchalan are recognised and accepted by all divisions of the tribe.

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The three most important and most elaborate ceremonies, the Junggawon, the Ngulmarrk, and the Gunabibbi, as well as several others of lesser importance, are all associated with this Kaitchalan cult. In these ceremonies various phases of his activities are dramatically portrayed. He controls the forces of nature, and very definitely influences the lives of the people to-day. His power is exercised in a benign and helpful way, but he can be greatly angered by breaches of the tribal laws. In this cult there is little that is objectionable, and much that is admirable. The ceremonies associated with this cult are marked by great reverence and spiritual passion, and one feels that there is in them a real searching after spiritual truth.

culture-heroine in mythology; and all the more so, as no such distinctively 171
creative powers were ascribed to females in the myths of 773
any other region then studied, such as the Kimberley Division of 773
Western Australia, the Great Victoria Desert, North Queensland, 562
nor South-East Australia. In the north-west and north-east of the continent, the important creative culture-heroes are males and many of them were at times in animal form. In the South-East not only was the male aspect dominant, but there was only one great hero, for each tribe or region, named here Bundjil, there Nurunderi, or Baiami or Gulambra or Goin and so on.*

In 1939 my friend, Mr. W. E. Harney, who had spent many years [114]
in and around Arnhem Land, and has a greater and sounder knowledge
of Aboriginal custom, belief and ritual than any other layman
sent me some notes in which much prominence was given to the
"Old Woman," Kunapipi, both in doctrines and in ritual. After [794]
discussing the material with him, I was satisfied that in the Roper, 776
Macarthur and Victoria River areas, a very vivid cult of the "mother-
goddess" type was functioning. Her name varied, being Kunapipi, 773
Mumuna, Kliarin-Kliari, and so on, but she was usually referred to
as the "Old Woman" or the "Mother". She was the source of life in
man and nature, both in the Dreamtime or creative past and now.
In this activity she was associated with a great serpent, usually the
Rainbow serpent, who "made the road" into the womb for the pre- [775]
existent spirits to be incarnated and reincarnated. She was also the
very earth itself, that from which living things came and on which
they depended for sustenance. This doctrine was expressed in the 796
Kunapipi ritual. In it her womb was represented, by a trench into
which the initiands were put, and from which they were reborn. In
addition, the bullroarer, also representing her womb, when swung
at the ritual became the sojourning symbol of each initiand's ritual
or "wood" spirit. After the ceremony, when the Yermalindji, the
symbol of the great snake, was burnt in the earth-womb, the bull-
roarer was buried there also. Thus, the lad's ritual "shade" remained
in Kunapipi, and did so until the disintegration of the symbol, when [775]

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* I can speak from personal field work for all these regions except the north-east. See also articles in *Oceania*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 46-62, R. Piddington, "Karadjeri Initiation". Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 66-93, Ursula H. McConnel, "Myths of the Wikmunkan and Wiknatara Tribes"; *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, No. 4, pp. 452-477, Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 69-105, "Totemic Hero Cults in the Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland"; Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 382-404, A. Capell, "Mythology in Northern Kimberley". Vol. XIII, No. 3, pp. 255-260, and Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 31-53; "A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", by R. and C. Berndt, *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945.

Also D. F. Thomson, "The Hero Cult, Initiation and Totemism on Cape York", *Journal, Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXIII, pp. 453-538; and "Notes on a Hero Cult from the Gulf of Carpentaria, North Queensland", *op. cit.* Vol. LXIV, pp. 217-236. A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 475-508.

114 that the several centuries of contact with Macassan and pre-Macassan traders, fishers and sojourners which marked the Arnhem Land
177 coasts from the Victoria River right round to Groote Eylandt, were
794 not experienced in the other two tropical regions. It is, therefore, possible that pre-Islamic religious influence was exerted on the
796 Aborigines, perhaps through individuals who accompanied the Macassans and others to the islands to the north, for in some of these, the earlier Hindu cults were cherished in spite of the proselytizing nature of Islam. Moreover, the Mother cult-heroine is said in
[773] myths to have come through the sea, whether she be Kunapipi of the Victoria and the Roper, or the Mother of the Iwaidja and other tribes of Western Arnhem Land.*

### *Mana and Other Problems*

The above is the general principle and question raised by the
114 Kunapipi cult. Mr. Berndt's book, however, in giving a description
778 and analysis of this cult, raises many other important matters. For example, there is the problem of power or "grace" in religion, indicated in north-east Arnhem Land by the term *dal*. It is the anthropological problem of *mana* over again. It operates through the Mother
[776] or through Ancestral Beings who in their "spirit parts" are present in the ritual. But does the ritual automatically release that power, setting it in motion for the welfare of man and nature? Or is it manifested through life and increase by the will of the Mother or other Being in response to the ritual? Obviously, according to the doctrine, it cannot operate apart from such Being or Beings. Indeed, is it not that Being in activity or rather in relation to man and nature —an activity and presence realized in ritual? Problems associated with the Doctrine of the Trinity are not peculiar to Christianity.

114 Mr. Berndt agrees with Professor Warner that the Aborigines are not ignorant of physiological paternity. The ritual supports this con-
842 tention. True, these natives hold also the doctrine of pre-existence,
796 of spirit-children who enter the mothers for incarnation. But, what this entry does is to provide the "shade", the eternal spirit-part, and so give life to that which is already in the womb, as the result of sexual intercourse. Intercourse does not merely prepare the way for the entry of the child-spirit and for its subsequent birth; this is the usual view. In addition, it is followed by the formation of the foetus

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* The point of entry of the Fertility Mother cult of north-western Arnhem Land is definitely placed by the Aborigines and their song cycles in the Coburg Peninsula. The Kunapipi cult, however, seems to be distinct from this, and while I incline to find its point of distribution in the lower Victoria region, the final decision must wait for more research in the field and further analysis of the material already in hand. Mr. Berndt's maps in this volume refer only to the recent and present movement of Kunapipi songs, the movement west from the Roper being a return along a song route to a western point of distribution, and not necessarily diffusion from a point of entry at the mouth of the Roper.

# PREFACE

The main purpose of this work is to indicate some fundamental 121
features of an Australian Aboriginal religious cult, the Kunapipi, in
one particular area. North-eastern Arnhem Land has been selected, 794
not because it presents a more exotic background or more spec-
tacular ceremonies, but because the cult as seen here is fairly well
defined, and because its religious concepts are important and sig-
nificant to the people concerned. In this region there are several
fairly well integrated religious cults, having a common theme and
fundamental intent. Most of them, however, have complex local
associations, whereas the Kunapipi ceremonies, which have been
introduced into north-east Arnhem Land, belong to a configuration
which is still widely diffused throughout the Northern Territory.

The plan is to examine the cult as seen in this one region, to con- 121
sider its relative importance in adjacent areas, and so prepare the
way for a more intensive analysis of it in the central-western part 177
of the Northern Territory. Although introduced, the Kunapipi has
become closely associated with more truly north-east Arnhem Land
mythology, in particular, the Wauwalak, which is used to explain it;
but the Wauwalak mythology itself was at some time diffused into
north-eastern Arnhem Land, apparently from the same direction as
this much later ritual.

The Kunapipi songs of Yirrkalla (in north-east Arnhem Land) [533]
have been derived from those commonly in use further south. By
examining relevant songs and mythology of adjacent areas, it is
possible to trace the movement and diffusion of this cult from one
group to another, and to discuss (for instance) the source of the
Yirrkalla Kunapipi. This is not really difficult, for the Kunapipi (in
all the regions mentioned in this work) possesses the common theme [776]
of a Great Mother, expressed as either a single or a dual personality,
her power being extended to her daughters, the Wauwalak,
Ka'lerika'lering or Mungamunga. She is said to be responsible for the [842]
constant fertility of human beings and other natural species, and the
continuing sequence of the seasons, as well as for the general simi-
larity of her ritual, emblems and songs. In addition, certain "key" [192]
words, which are sacred, are used widely to designate ceremonies,
objects and sacred beings. 771

What does this cult mean to its postulants? Why does it exist? 794
What do the people themselves believe that they are receiving from 796
it? Its basic intent seems to express the latent or conscious desires of 121
773

Several aspects should perhaps be mentioned in this *Preface*, 121
since they throw new light on the study of Aboriginal religion.

Throughout the greater part of the Northern Territory the concept 771
of a Fertility Mother is found. She is the direct or indirect 776
inspiration of all religious thought and activity. She is the central theme of the Kunapipi ceremonies. Indeed, Kunapipi is one of her sacred names. Her "eternal" presence throws new light on the philosophy of totemism in the region, for it was she, herself without a totem, who brought the totems into being. Animals, birds, reptiles, Spirits, inanimate objects, physiographic features, became totemic through her divine influence and association, or because they served some purpose in relation to her "eternal" rôle of creator, cause of birth and rebirth and seasonal fluctuations. In the Kunapipi then, the totem bears the sacred imprint of its religious or mythological connection with the Mother. In this region, therefore, the study of totemism is a means to an end: and that end, where we have any detailed knowledge, is the Mother herself, existing as a divine Being serving as an explanation of religious thought, belief and behaviour.

This leads to the realm of the sacred, but the problem of the demarcation between the sacred and the profane, and of the part played by women in sacred ritual, particularly in the Kunapipi itself, needs to be considered far more intensively than is possible here.

Religious thought and action permeate the whole of an indigenous 121
society, and are not manifested only on the sacred ceremonial ground
when groups meet for the performance of ritual. Therefore, it is 771
sometimes difficult to separate the sacred from the profane. A man 778
or woman does not receive sacred power directly or indirectly from the Sacred Mother only on the ceremonial ground, through the performance of ritual. He, or she, possesses innately a sacred or divine essence, which exists apart from any external coercion: whatever his or her degree of participation in the sacred collective rites, this personal germ of sacredness remains intact, and cannot be destroyed even by death. It seems probable however that this individual germ, which may perhaps be described as a person's own sacred aura, may
be intensified on the occasion of religious ceremonies. The spirit of a [774]
man (or woman) is derived directly from the Sacred Mother; his bones themselves are possessed of a sacred quality, being likened to the *rangga* emblems associated with the great ancestral Beings; and he himself bears "inside" (sacred) and "outside" (secular) personal names, which are in many cases of sacred origin.

Women have a far greater part to play in sacred religious ceremonies 121
than has hitherto been observed. This is particularly the case 562
in north-eastern Arnhem Land; and in the performance of the Kunapipi 771
they are directly responsible for the efficacy of a whole series of 796
ceremonies. Because they do not take part in all the rituals of a particular cult, this does not mean that they are excluded or are

121 consequently irreligious. Woman, or more precisely her unique
562 ability to create, together with man's power to inseminate, has
771 become a feature of native religion in these areas, crystallized in the
796 concept of the Mother, whom we see manifested in (for instance) the
[831] Kunapipi. The aura thus surrounding, and radiating from, this
[776] Fertility Mother has been extended in some degree to native women
to-day.

Another problem arising from the study of the Kunapipi cult
121 which needs detailed consideration, is that of individual origins.
794 Throughout the greater part of the Territory, specific cults have been
inspired either by one or, in some cases, by two or three Ancestral
773 Beings. Through their own personality and power, it is said, they
succeeded in indoctrinating the whole social group in which they
776 found themselves. They brought with them what appear to have been new ideologies, with attendant ritual, emblems, songs, and mythology in which they themselves now play a dominant part. This individual aspect is apparent in the case of the Kunapipi Mother, who arose from the waters of the Roper River Mouth (*vide* Chapter XI), bringing with her the main features of what we now call the Kunapipi cult. The same principle is evident in the appearance of the Djanggawul (*vide* Chapter I) and of Laintjung (Chapter I) in north-eastern Arnhem Land; both these Beings appear to have inspired virile cults, substantiated by mythology which details their adventures, their activities and beliefs. The society itself, of course, must have been more or less receptive to the introduction of these religious beliefs. That is to say, the religious leader, whether Kunapipi,
[182] Laintjung or the Djanggawul Brother or Sisters, was able to impress his (or her) own point of view on that society, which in turn was willing to adopt his views and ideas, so giving social impetus to the introduced religion.

This aspect of individual origins, in relation to specific Australian Aboriginal cults, is an important one. The contention, which may be substantiated by mythology and the traditional song-cycles, is that a powerful personality—such as the Great Mother, the acknowledged spiritual leader and inspiration of the Kunapipi cult—possessed of ability beyond the ordinary, can and does exert his or her influence on the society in which he is either temporarily or permanently living; and that influence, helped by favourable circumstances, is sufficient to establish a cult which attracts adherents, and becomes in its own right an important social function and institution.

121 The migration of Ancestral Beings, like Kunapipi and others, into
771 a particular society, bringing with them a religious cult, is a fairly
773 general phenomenon in Aboriginal religious life. Major Ancestral
794 Beings very rarely arise in the country of the people with whom they
are mythologically associated, or in the society which serves as the
776 "incubator" for their specific ideology. Rather, the individual (in

the guise of an Ancestral Being) is the proselytizer, the carrier of the 121
germ of a religious idea, which is adopted by, and modified to suit, 771
the social group in which he finds himself. Whether he brought with 776
him the ingredients of that religion from his own "home", or whether 794
it took shape in consequence of his contact with the alien people, is a 773
matter for conjecture.

The diffusion of Aboriginal religious cults, such as the Kunapipi, 177
also presents some interesting features. A certain amount of more or
less "pure" evangelization has occurred in this respect; individual 794
cult leaders, of both historic and contemporary society, have been 797
interested in furthering the activities of the cult. But in their successful and unsuccessful attempts to introduce their particular beliefs into other groups, they take only the basis of their cult life, and do not as a rule attempt to superimpose their own cultural ideas and organization. In north-eastern Arnhem Land, for example, the Kunapipi,
recognized by/natives themselves as an introduced theme, has been [182]
fairly well integrated with existing social organization, religious life,
and secular beliefs; even its mythology has been altered to meet the demands of local ethics, while the alien songs are interpreted in the light of indigenous criteria. Nevertheless, the basic ideology and construction of the Kunapipi cult remain: and it is this aspect which
really concerns the proselytizer. The same process may be observed [171]
in other regions, such as western Arnhem Land, the Daly River-Port Keats area, and west-central Northern Territory.

* * * *

A word should be said concerning the presentation of Kunapipi 128
Song Cycles (that is, in Chapters VII, VIII, X, and XI). Their value lies in their substantiation of the cult's doctrine, explaining its outward expression in ritual and in the use of ceremonial emblems and objects. Such traditional songs ensure that the original intent of the cult is not lost or radically misinterpreted. To-day, however, misinterpretation is possible as a result of conflicting loyalties arising from the contact of Aboriginal with European culture. In order to restrict ourselves to the literal interpretation of these songs, it has been found necessary to present them with an interlinear translation, a general rendering, and a brief commentary based on native interpretation: this method makes available the maximum amount of
data. The phonetic script used conforms to that of the International [104]
Phonetic Association,[2] amended for use in Australia by Dr. A. Capell.[3] [126]

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[2] G. Noel-Armfield, *General Phonetics*, 1931, pp. 21-23. *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia", *Oceania Bound Reprint*, Sydney, 1945, pp. 262-264, or *Oceania*, Vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 50-52.

[3] A. Capell, *Methods and Materials for Recording Australian Languages*, Sydney, 1945 (reprinted from *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 144-176). Since the complete phonetic script was not available for rendering native words in this volume, some equivalents in ordinary English lettering have been used.

616 with introduced or external themes. The Djanggawu[1] and Wauwalak
●[776] Spirit Beings, the guardians of the most sacred and esoteric ritual,
are *dua*, while Laintjung, Baijini, Macassan and Badu mythology,
[773] ritual, songs and belief are *jiritja*.[2]

As we have said, the *mala* and *mata* belong either to one moiety
614 or to the other; but detailed topographical maps of the region
197 reveal that clan territories are very elastic, so that isolated sites
relating to one moiety may exist in the clan country of the opposite
616 moiety, and so on. Further, the traditional home territory of one
[423] group may be situated elsewhere than it is to-day. This is often discovered only by analysis of clan mythology and its relationship to that of other clans, and the inclusion of linguistic groups in clans which originally were not associated with these particular *mata*. The whole study of clan and linguistic group organization is extremely complicated. We shall, however, mention several of the best known of these, in order to demonstrate their complexity: it is not necessary, for the purpose of this work, to deal with them in any detail.

Dalwongu is a *jiritja mata*, that means "Spring water flowing after
614 rain and the swamp bird, *wanba*, calling out when he sees it". It
616 belongs not only to the Nungulrulpoi (meaning "a shoal of *gunbirawi*
young mullet") whose alternate name is Numbiripala (meaning
192 "those who subincise", that is, they are influenced from Rose River: *vide* the body of this work), or Malar'watjeri (i.e. "the clan of the subincision"), but to others. These particular Dalwongu are distinguished from the others by the "heavy" quality of their language. Allied to this Dalwongu *mata*, within this particular *mala*, are the Kalaulwun (meaning "the *wanba* bird in the bamboo tree") and Mararba (that is, "the *wanba* bird") *mata*, who belong also to other *mala* and not only to the Nungulrulpoi. The alternate term for the *mala*, Malar'watjeri, is used also as a separate *mala*, and its *mata* are Dalwongu, Bilmalandji ("paperbark near the salt water") and Di:agoi (meaning "paperbark"): this Dalwongu group is allied to the first, and to the other *mata* which are rightfully Malar'watjeri.

Another Dalwongu group belongs to the Ngelkala *mala* (meaning

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[113] [2] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, Sacred Figures of Ancestral Beings of Arnhem Land, *Oceania*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 309–326, 2 plates and text figures; Secular Figures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 51, No. 2; R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16–50; Badu, Islands of the Spirits, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, pp. 93–103, plate; C. Berndt, Expressions of Grief Among Aboriginal Women, *Oceania*, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 286–332; R. and C. Berndt, Discovery of Pottery in North-Eastern Arnhem Land, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LXXVII, Part 2; A. P. Elkin, R. and C. Berndt, *Art in Arnhem Land*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, and University of Chicago Press, 1950; R. Berndt, *Djanggawul*, for publication (a detailed study of the Djanggawul religious cult of north-eastern Arnhem Land); R. Berndt, *Daughters of the Sun* (a further study of the Djanggawul cult from the north-central Arnhem Land point of view), for publication; R. and C. Berndt, *Arnhem Land, Its History and Its People* (F. W. Cheshire, for publication); R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land* (sexual behaviour in north-eastern Arnhem Land), volume for publication.

tion of other natural species—all phenomena which are necessary for 771
the continuance and well-being of the people themselves. In keeping, 789
with this doctrine, a natural development has been the stress on pro-
creation—the importance of pregnancy and child-birth, and the 794
essential sequence of sexual intercourse and conception, expressed [842]
particularly in ritual and long song cycles.

In order to understand Kunapipi cult life and belief, it is necessary to summarize very briefly some of the other cults which flourish beside it in this area.

The Djanggawul myth, consisting of several hundreds of lengthy 773
songs, relates the adventures of two men and two women, who in
the Dreaming Period landed at Port Bradshaw, on the north-east [533]
Arnhem Land coast. They had journeyed across the sea from an
island called Bralku, now known as the *dua* home of the dead, some-
where beyond Groote Eylandt. These Ancestral Beings are known
generally as the Djanggawul, but had their own personal names.
The leader was Djanggawul himself; the two women were his
sisters, the younger Maralaitj, and the older Pildjiwuraroiju; and
their companion was Bralbral, who plays only a minor part in this
great cycle. In their canoe they brought a large conical *ngainmara*
mat, which is now used particularly by the women, and also certain [778]
sacred *rangga* sticks possessing life-giving qualities. The mat sym- [831]
bolized the uterus; the *rangga* sticks were penes, and when not being
used ritually, were kept hidden in the *ngainmara*.

As the Djanggawul journeyed along the coast, they met other
Ancestral Beings like Laintjung and the Baijini, and Spirits such as [776]
Pomapoma, Kultana, Woijal, Burulu-burulu and others; but none
of these had the procreating powers of the great Djanggawul.
Djanggawul had an elongated penis; and his two sisters had long [831]
clitori which dragged on the ground as they walked. Djanggawul had
sexual relations with his sisters, so that they were continually preg-
nant. From time to time, at the camps where they stayed, he would
lift their clitori to one side, and put his hand up into the uteri to
remove many children of both sexes: these were the ancestors of the
present aborigines. The song cycle features the perpetual pregnancy 773
of the two sisters, their uteri being likened to the *ngainmara* mats 533
which they brought with them, while the people who are removed
from them in childbirth are the *rangga*. It is said that a person's
bones are like *rangga*, inherited from both the father and mother, [827]
who in turn inherited theirs through the generations of ancestors,
right back to the Eternal Times of Djanggawul and the creative
heroes. Therefore, at death, a person's material remains, as well as
his spiritual substance, must be treated with respect, and surrounded [764]
by ritual.

An important aspect of this myth, second only to the theme of 773
fertility, concerns the institution of sacred ritual. In the beginning, 796

CHAPTER II

# KUNAPIPI, THE SACRED CULT

171 794 Throughout Arnhem Land, and the Northern Territory south of Yirrkalla, around and below the Roper River; west across the plains and swamps of the Buffalo country to the Daly River, and beyond, towards Port Keats and Timber Creek, and further west into Western Australia: south-west into the central cattle country around Victoria River Downs, Wave Hill, Gordon Downs, towards Hall's Creek in the Eastern Kimberleys; through inhospitable desert regions around Tanami and the Granites, and eastwards across the main North-South Road; through the tribal territories of groups with differing cultures and language—the sacred name of Kunapipi is known.

The Kunapipi Cult is diffused over an immense area, and is known sometimes by alternate names; but though its rituals and ceremonies may differ in some minor points, and its doctrine may vary, its intent remains fundamentally the same, and its background is similar throughout all these areas.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the name Kunapipi expresses a dual concept: on the one hand it refers to a Fertility Mother, or Mothers, and on the other to the great Rainbow Snake. This is the symbolism of the Uterus and the Penis, natural instruments of fecundity. In other areas, such as the Daly River, or central-western Northern Territory, the term Kunapipi (although still known) changes to Kalwadi, or to Kadjari, translated into English as "Old Woman", or described as "Mother belonging to you and me". In the north-western and central-western regions of the Northern Territory, more stress is placed on the concept of a Fertility Mother, and less on the Rainbow Snake. In the Milingimbi region, when discussing the Kunapipi,[1] Professor Lloyd Warner accentuates the importance of the great Rock Pythons who swallowed the Wauwalak Sisters, but overlooks the underlying significance of the Two Sisters as Fertility Mothers.

171 776 794 Throughout the areas mentioned, a basic feature of Aboriginal religion is the belief in an Original Mother (or Mothers), herself a Creative Being and the essence of fertility and abundance. In western Arnhem Land the Mother is the inspiration and sponsor of the *u:ba:r* (equivalent to the north-eastern Arnhem Land *uwar* of the

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773 [1] L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, 1937, pp. 290–311, and 372–375.

*ngu:rlmak* ritual) and *ma'ralin* cults;[2] on Bathurst and Melville Islands 171
the Earth Mothers are said to have brought into being the human 776
and natural species, and to have introduced their system of social
organization. The now virtually extinct Laraki:a shared this same 794
cult: and so did the Daly River people who built circular stone 773
structures to symbolize the wombs of their creative Mothers.[*] The cult of Kalwadi is still strong in the north-western quarter of the Territory; as the Kadjari, it spreads down to the central-west, where it is met by another Kadjari cult from the Tanami-Granites desert, and the Billaluna region in Western Australia.

This Mother[3] is always present behind the ritual, the dancing and the singing. She is a symbol of the productive qualities of the earth, the eternal replenisher of human, animal and natural resources; it was from her uterus that human and totemic beings came forth. She has no totem herself, nor is she a totemic concept; she does not herself perform totemic ritual, although her neophytes do. In these areas, she is the background of all totemic ceremony, an "eternal" explanation and symbol of the Aboriginal way of life, with its continual expectation of rebirth.

In her sacred mythology she may be alone, or may appear as Two Sisters; or, in some areas, the Two Sisters may be described as her daughters. For example, from the Roper River westwards, through the Victoria River district into Western Australia, her daughters are the exotic and beautiful Mungamunga, representing an ideal of young aboriginal womanhood. Although the Mungamunga are themselves associated with their Mother in sacred ritual (see Chapters X and XI), they do not play an important part; they are concerned principally with secret magico-religious ceremonies of women, and with love magic of both sexes.

The Mother herself, Kunapipi, Kalwadi or Kadjari, is represented in certain parts of the mythology as a perpetually pregnant woman, who in the Dream-Time let out from her uterus human beings, the progenitors of the present natives. She was responsible too for sending out spirits of the natural species from season to season, to ensure their continual increase. In this she did not act entirely alone, but in association with a Rainbow Snake, the symbolic Penis, which completed the dual concept. This aspect is particularly important, for it reflects the part played by the male in fertilization.

In a remarkable series of drawings from central-western Northern

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[2] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land* (volume to be published by the Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, New York), Chapter IV, Sections I to VIII.

[*] Knut Dahl, *In Savage Australia*, London, 1926, pp. 233-4, figs. 9-10 This. writer records stone structures in the vicinity of the Mary River, in "Buffalo country", west of the western Arnhem Land fringe.

[3] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, The Eternal Ones of the Dream, *Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 67-78, illustrated (3 plates).

171 Territory,[4] artists depict human beings, as totemites, flowing from
794 the uterus of the Mother into the round "ring place" (or ceremonial
ground) for the performance of sacred rites. The "ring place" is
773 itself the uterus of the Mother. To-day, in the really important sacred
776 ceremonies, a special ring place is used for the performance of these
rituals. As the neophytes leave the camp for the sacred ground, they
[778] themselves are said to become increasingly sacred, and to enter the
Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the
beginning. When the ritual is completed the Mother "lets them out";
they emerge from the ring place, and pass once more into ordinary
life. These ring places vary in shape from place to place, but all symbolize
the Mother's uterus. The sacred ceremonies associated with
this Fertility Woman are called in pidgin English "Big Sunday",
[778] inferring a sacred atmosphere from the European connotation of the
word Sunday, while the term refers also to "sandy place", the soft
ground upon which the sacred dancing is performed. The appellation
"Big Sunday", in some regions, may also be derived from the term
"Centre" place, which refers to the sacred ceremonial ground.

All Kunapipi ritual, irrespective of region, has thus a common
796 theme. We find in it the return to the Mother's uterus, and the
794 eventual emergence, when the postulants come out from their sacred
ritual refreshed, and as "new" men (that is, it is like a "rebirth"):
771 this symbolic enactment of birth brings with it a renewal of ideals,
energy and faith. Fertility and the supplying of food, sexual pleasure
831 and satisfaction, solidarity within the group, and an undividing
faith in the divine truth of the cult—all these elements are present.
Food and sex, fundamental in human life, and consequently in
religion, owe their continuance, it is said, to the Eternal Mother.
It is not surprising that people living in such close proximity to
nature, with few artificial distractions, should recognise the fundamental
importance of female fertility, and see in it a central theme of
religion.

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171 In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the Kunapipi cult is not yet
deeply entrenched, since it has been introduced within comparatively
794 recent times. Its earliest infiltration took place through the Reinbaranga
(sometimes termed Rembranga, and localized in south-western
177 Arnhem Land) and Burera tribes and so into Milingimbi,
where Professor L. Warner witnessed some of its rituals twenty years
ago. From this centre it spread westwards towards Goulburn
Islands and Oenpelli,[5] and eastwards to Elcho Island and Arnhem
Bay. But it does not seem to have gripped, at that time, the imagina-

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[4] *Vide* R. and C. Berndt, *op. cit. Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Plates I to III; and R. and C. Berndt, Aboriginal Art in Central-Western Northern Territory, *Meanjin*, Spring, 1950, pp. 183–188, ten plates.

[5] R. and C. Berndt, *Sexual Behaviour in Western Arnhem Land*, Chapter IV, Section IX.

tion of the people further east, around Yirrkalla, Cape Arnhem and 171
Caledon Bay.

It was not until perhaps fifteen years ago that the cult gradually 794
spread northwards from Rose River, where its custodians were the 177
Nungguboiju group who had obtained it from the Roper River
people, particularly from the Mangarei-Ma:ra-Alawa tribes. The
Lultma'rangu (*dua* moiety), Dalwongu and Mararba (*jiritja* moiety)
linguistic groups were the first to come within its influence; they
mixed with people from Rose River to perform Kunapipi ceremonies
around Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, and occasional Kunapipi
rituals were held round about Yirrkalla.

But although these people did perform the Kunapipi at relevant 171
seasons, this did not take the place of indigenous religious belief and 177
practice. The great ceremonies of the *dua* and *jiritja* moiety *nara* were
still the most important; and the *djunggdwon* and *ngu:rlmak* rituals, 616
associated with the two Wauwalak Sisters and the Rock Pythons, 794
retained their importance in the minds of the north-eastern people. 796
Kunapipi in this area was subsidiary, whereas in most of the other
areas mentioned above her rituals held a paramount position.

The introduced Kunapipi cult brought with it all its attendant 177
ritual and ceremonial activity, but apparently its original mythology
(see Chapters IX and X) became merged with that of the Wauwalak.[6] 184
It was, in consequence, more readily accepted by the local people, 773
for the Wauwalak myth-cycle embraces much of the indigenous
religion. Thus, instead of becoming just another introduced ceremony, 794
the Kunapipi became a cult associated with a series of cults, having 796
roots in indigenous mythology. The Wauwalak mythology had much
in common with that of the southern Kunapipi. Both possessed the
same concept of fertility. The Wauwalak sisters became indirectly
the dual Mothers, continually replenishing the earth with human [776]
beings and with the natural species. Even the Rainbow Snake was
presnt, i c the form of the Rock Pythons, who finally swallowed the
Sisters. Fundamentally, too, the arrangement of the sacred dancing
ground, and much of the incidental ceremony (when the special
Kunapipi objects are not used) are similar to those of the *djunggawon*
and *ngu:rlmak* rituals.

One aspect of the Kunapipi is slightly at variance with local 773
indigenous belief. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the Fertility 776
Mothers are the sisters of Djanggawul, Pildjiwuraroiju and Miralaitj.
The Wauwalak, although associated with the idea of fertility, are not 184
concerned with human or animal creation: they are said to be the 794
daughters of the elder Djanggawul sister, removed from her uterus
by her Brother. According to conventional Kunapipi mythology,

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[6] The Wauwalak mythology itself was introduced much earlier into north-eastern Arnhem Land, its original source being found in the mythology of the Kunapipi: *vide* Chapters IX and X.

184 the Mother (or Mothers), represented quite often by Two Sisters
even in central-western Northern Territory, is the creative Being;
773 so from this point of view the Wauwalak cycle, now substantiating
●776 the introduced Kunapipi, should possess Two Sisters who are them-
selves creative Beings. Local belief however accords this status only
794 to the Djanggawul; but since the Wauwalak are their daughters, the
original doctrine is not greatly inconvenienced. The creative Mothers
may still be the Djanggawul, making their appearance through the
Wauwalak Sisters, while the Wauwalak themselves are the Munga-
munga of the south.

The actual meaning of the name Kunapipi is not easy to discover.
773 The cult itself, with its relevant ceremonies, and the myth that sub-
794 stantiates the ritual, is Kunapipi, and this, in most areas mentioned
796 above, is translated as the "Mother", or "Old Woman". The term
"old" in this context signifies status and age, although not elderly
appearance. Dr. Warner[7] notes that Kunapipi (spelt "Gunabibi") is
[114] one name of the Pythons which swallowed the Wauwalak; but, as
mentioned above, this writer stresses the importance of the Snakes
at the expense of the Fertility Mothers, and this element is by far the
most apparent in north-eastern Arnhem Land religion.

192 At Yirrkalla, the name Kunapipi is said to have two meanings.
304 First, the word Kunapipi means "whistle-cock" (that is, a sub-
831 incisure): for these ceremonies came up from the Rose and the
[171] Roper Rivers where subincision is general, whereas throughout the
greater part of north-eastern Arnhem Land only circumcision is
practised. The ceremonies of Kunapipi in the Yirrkalla region may
also be termed *wiri:i* or *wira'i*, meaning "incisure". But Kunapipi
means also the uterus of the Mother. That is, the incised penis symbolizes the snake (Python or Rainbow Snake), and the incisure itself the uterus. Symbolically, then, the subincised male member represents both the female and the male organs, essential in the process of fructification.

More generally, however, the term Kunapipi is said to mean the Mother, and in isolated cases the Snake, both being accepted versions. It is because Kunapipi is translated as Fertility Mother, through the greater part of the Northern Territory, that we have preferred to use that appellation.

794 A number of ceremonies throughout the northern half of the
Northern Territory are associated with Fertility Mothers and Rain-
796 bow (or Great) Snakes; and it is possible that the majority of these
cults are linked with one another, even if their outward expressions
184 are dissimilar. This aspect requires intensive study, including the
collection of mythological texts, and analysis of relevant ritual and
songs. The Kunapipi cult, however, consists of certain distinctive
elements, that are found throughout the areas we have mentioned.

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[7] L. Warner, *op. cit*, p. 294.

For example, the Kunapipi held at Yirrkalla is essentially similar to
that held at Birrundudu (towards the Western Australian border in 184
central-western Northern Territory). There is the spasmodic use of 794
bullroarers; the sacred ground itself is the uterus of the Mother; a 796
sacred well (*nanggaru*) is dug on the dancing ground; a crescent-shaped trench (*kanala*) is made later; *jelmalandji* "posts" are erected, immense structures symbolizing the Pythons; there is the exchange of wives and gifts, with ceremonial intercourse; and the forked posts, called the *djepalmandji*, are used towards the termination of the rituals. These are features of all Kunapipi, Kalwadi and Kadjari ceremonies.

A word may be said too of the songs that are used in the Yirrkalla- 184
Rose River Kunapipi Cycle.[8] These are mostly of the short conven- 533
tional type common throughout most of Aboriginal Australia,[9] and
their words serve as "key" patterns suggesting and inferring ideas, 794
rather than providing detailed description. This form of song 796
structure is, like the Kunapipi, alien to north-eastern Arnhem Land, where usually songs are very lengthy, description is detailed and repetitious, and separate cycles contain several hundreds of songs (or verses). Secular and magico-religious *tjarada* love songs, which are often associated incidentally with the sacred Kunapipi (for they
are sometimes connected with the Mungamunga), have also found [177]
their way up through Rose River to north-east Arnhem Land, and
have retained their own song-structure against much local opposition from semi-indigenous forms.[10]

The major theme in all Kunapipi ritual is the natural cycle of 794
reproduction and fertility. Fertility, as expressed in reproduction,
seasonal fluctuation, periods of plenty and scarcity, is symbolized 796
in the ceremonies associated with animals, birds and plants, their 831
mating, copulating and bearing offspring in their proper seasons.
The essential factor of mating and copulating, as a step towards 776
reproduction, is crystallized in ceremonial copulation on the sacred ground. And ever present, "eternally" watchful and omnipotent, is the Great Mother, the essence of fecundity, in whose divine power rests the strength to animate and increase both human beings and the natural species. The performance of rituals attracts her interest, and brings into motion her protecting influence, which ensures a continuation of the world that her neophytes know, and the unbroken sequence of the seasons upon which they depend for their livelihood.

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[8] *Vide* Chapters VII and VIII of this work.

[9] R. Berndt, A Wonguri-Mandjikai Song Cycle of the Moon Bone, *Oceania*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, pp. 16-50.

[10] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*. In this work a Rose River Love Song Cycle and the *tjarada* are detailed and discussed.

the men's duplicity. This is particularly apparent in the Djanggawul 562
myth (*vide*, for example, Chapters I and IV). Merely because they do 773
not join in certain of the most sacred mysteries, women do not feel 794
"left out" of things, or pushed aside into what has been termed by 796
some writers a profane existence, with attendant feelings of inferiority. On the contrary, they realize that they have a supplementary function in maintaining camp dancing, and answering the men's ritualistic calls from the sacred ground. It is necessary, for instance, that they prepare food for the men at such times, and observe certain
tabus. [424]
A woman must know her own totemic clan songs, inherited from her father, and to a lesser extent those of her mother, and be able to sing them on appropriate occasions. She must know the correct dance movements and steps to accompany the men's singing in the "outside" ceremonies, as well as in the sacred rituals where she has her own part to play. There is no jealousy of the men's performances alone on the sacred ground. The men, so women say, are performing these ceremonies not only for themselves, but for all
the people in general. This is simply a normal extension of the [462]
sexual division of labour and activity.

* * * *

The story of the Wauwalak is rarely told in prose by a story-teller 583
of this region. Usually it is transmitted from one group of men to
another, through the generations, in ritual, accompanied by explana- 773
tions, on the ceremonial ground. Moreover, the whole myth is related in the sacred "inside" Wauwalak cycle of some hundreds of songs, in two main series: the "inside" Bush cycle, and the "inside" seaside cycle, each describing in detail the adventures of the Sisters. There are also the "outside" (secular) Bush and seaside cycles, sung in the main camp to the dancing of women: these continue the story, and reveal many aspects of the myth. Each one of these songs is representative of the very best in native poetry,[1] which it is not possible to set down in the bare general translation presented here.

The Wauwalak myth begins in a region usually unidentified (*vide* 171
Chapter IX), said vaguely to be somewhere south in the "Bush".
This means, perhaps, that the Wauwalak sisters came from the direc- 773
tion of the Roper River, the hypothetical home of the Kunapipi 776
Mother and her two daughters, the Mungamunga. In any case, the Wauwalak came northwards at an early period, towards the mainland opposite the Crocodile Islands (that is, near Milingimbi), bringing with them the rituals of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*. Then the myth itself became to some extent localized in northern Arnhem Land. It is on the mainland south of Milingimbi that the most sacred totemic sites connected with the Wauwalak are found;

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[1] This is reserved for a detailed study of the Wauwalak Cycle in relation to the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ceremonies.

171 and it was to this region, apparently within historic times, that the
773 Kunapipi found its way and finally became established. On the
eastern side of Arnhem Land we hear little of the local travels and
776 adventures of the Wauwalak: all the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ritual of that area is inspired by the myth which centres around this country near Milingimbi. One version only, endeavouring apparently to weld the Wauwalak mythology more closely to the Rose River Kunapipi, relates that the Two Sisters came up from the Roper River through Nungguboiju territory to Rose River, and continued directly up the coast to Kararwu, at Arnhem Bay.

773 The Wauwalak sisters, one older and one younger, left their home territory, the land of the *dua* Wauwalak people. Before leaving, the elder sister had incestuous relations with a clansman, and as a result she became pregnant. She was called *gungman* (that is, a mature child-bearing woman), while the younger girl, or *wirlkul*, was *kalngawona* (that is, having no child). They travelled in the direction of Muruwul (or Mu:ruwol) sacred waterhole, naming all the animals, birds and plants. Both of them carried stone spears, and wore decorative head-bands of feathered string and cane armlets: the younger sister, the *wirlkul*, wore a breast girdle of woven fibre, which fitted under her shoulder blades and her swelling breasts. They walked along, killing iguana, opossum, bandicoot, bush rat and kangaroo for food, and collecting yams. As they gathered these, placing them in their large *bulpul* dilly-bag, they said, "You will be *mareiin* later on". That is, the animals, yams, and so on would become sacred: they would be *rangga* objects, and be commemorated in ceremony.

The women came at last to Gru:awona, and the younger sister said: "We'll have a rest here".

"All right, sister", replied the other. "I feel my baby moving inside, and it will soon come out."

[616] They made a fire and rested there. A little later, this elder sister gave birth to a female child, who belonged to the *jiritja* moiety, although because of the incestuous union its father had been *dua*. They remained at this place, but the afterbirth blood was still flowing when the elder sister was walking about.

When she was well enough to move, they continued their journey towards Muruwul, which was not far from the sea-coast. The afterbirth blood was still running when they reached the sacred tabued well (or waterhole), and a trail of blood drops had been left all along the track. At Muruwul they made fire, and took some food from their dilly-bag for cooking.

First they placed an opossum on the fire to roast; but as soon as the creature began to grow warm, it got up and ran away. Then they tried to cook a bandicoot, but this too rose from the fire and ran away. The iguana and the rat, and all the other animals, did the same.

rain towards the billabong (1). 21 depicts a *gungalung* (big-headed 532
gecko lizard), playing around the Muruwul billabong after the rain; 773
for these lizards always come out at the beginning of the rainy season,
"and follow up the Julunggul".

This is a remarkable drawing of one aspect of sacred mythology in this region; it belongs to a large series dealing with all aspects of religious doctrine in north-eastern Arnhem Land.

This version tells us something of what happened to the Wauwalak after their swallowing. The first version also deals briefly with this aspect, as follows:

After the swallowing, the female Julunggul returned to Muruwul;
there she vomited the Wauwalak and child, who were revivified by
the bites of the ants, but were eventually re-swallowed. The Wau-
walak spirits are still at the sacred well: "we can't see them, although [776]
they can see us, for now they belong to Julunggul". When they see
human beings coming to this site, the Julunggul swallows them
again in their spirit form, "for they are unable to walk about like
ordinary people".

The Wauwalak-Julunggul mythology serves to substantiate the 773
Kunapipi rituals: a co-ordinating thread links the various events
set out in the story, and these are symbolically expressed in the 796
ceremonies. This myth is distributed among the three rituals already
mentioned, the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi* and *ngu:rlmak*; the *ma:ndiwala*
(the *marndiella* ceremony of Warner, *op. cit.* pp. 329–334), localized
around the Roper and Rose Rivers, has not yet reached north-east [171]
Arnhem Land. Each of them expresses a particular feature of the
myth.

The Kunapipi, adapted as it is to local traditional needs, has lost 773
none of its symbolism and intent. In conventional Kunapipi myth-
ology one of the principal themes is the Fertility Mother's pregnancy, 776
and her giving birth to "Dreaming" folk: these people she kept in 796
her womb, and "let them out" from time to time to perform sacred
ritual. Finally, there is her death, and the totemites' enactment of the
returning to and leaving the Mother's womb. The continual birth
and rebirth of the totemites symbolize the sequence of the seasons, [805]
for Kunapipi had the power to send out the spirits of all the natural
species. She was accompanied by the Rainbow Snake, her male
counterpart.

At Yirrkalla, the Fertility Mothers are the Wauwalak: the pecu- 773
liarly female characteristics of menstruation and afterbirth blood 776
accentuate the concept of procreation. The presence of the Pythons
(the male and female Snakes), their ejaculation of saliva (semen), 831
their entry into the *murlk*, and the swallowing, complete the theme.
The actual swallowing, said to mean coitus, may also symbolize the
"return of the Wauwalak to the uterus of their Mother", as in con-

773 ventional interpretation of Kunapipi mythology. The vomiting of the
Wauwalak, with their revivification and re-swallowing, and their
●776 subsequent swallowing in spirit form, extends the symbolism, and
may be compared with the coming and going (birth and rebirth) of
831 the totemites to and from the Mother's uterus.

This interpretation, based on details expressed by aborigines themselves, concerns only the Kunapipi rituals, for other purely indigenous ritual must be interpreted in the light of the Djanggawul mythology, and various extensions of the Wauwalak cycle. However, the basis of Yirrkalla religion rests on the premise of a Fertility Mother, who is an "Eternal" symbol of nature in her abundance. She is accompanied by a Great Snake as a symbol of insemination.

The association of the Snake with a Fertility Mother is fundamental in this doctrine. In recognizing this fact, we must realize that
[842] the aborigine of northern Arnhem Land understands the importance
of coitus in bringing about conception and birth. And this principle
is basic in their thinking.[13]

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[13] *Vide* L. Warner's interpretation, *op. cit.* pp. 371 *et seq.*

773 Dreaming Period. When they first leave their home camp they are
painted with red-ochre and arm-blood, which represent the blood
796 of the Wauwalak. That is, for the purpose of the ritual they become
203 the Two Sisters, and are swallowed by Julunggul; and on their emergence
from the ritual, they are revivified just as were the women. On
their returning home, they are again smeared with red-ochre and arm
blood before entering the sacred Kunapipi ground.

In all the rituals we find the main theme of the Wauwalak's adventure
773 with Julunggul; but subsidiary Pythons are present, and tend to
796 confuse this aspect of the doctrine. There are Lu'ningu, the Julunggul
herself (either alone, or with her husband playing an active or inactive
776 part), and the group of young snakes who watched the actual swallowing
of the Wauwalak. Another python, an unmarried male, is
associated with Gru:awona, where he still lives in his spirit form.
He threw up a great amount of earth and formed a hill; then he dug
up more earth, and formed another hill with a high bank at one side.
Under this bank he lives, beside the deep pool; here the water is
continually swirling, and its surface is the colour of the rainbow.
Close by, at Muruwul, it is said, is a rainbow reaching up into the
sky: that is Julunggul "twisting up" to catch the Wauwalak. It was
here, at Muruwul, that man first "took part for that Snake" (see
myth above); "for that Snake got to be Dreaming *mareiin* for us,
because he swallowed the Wauwalak. Now we make that Wauwalak
[778] *murlk* on our sacred ground, in just the same way as it was first made
at Muruwul. In it we place the long wooden *julunggul* 'trumpet', all
painted and decorated in totemic designs, for the *djunggawon*, or
the *uwar* log 'drum' for the *ngu:rlmak*. And instead of Julunggul
swallowing the Wauwalak, it swallows the young boys we send out
to the rituals".

In the Kunapipi the two long *jelmalandji* emblems are erected, but they cannot "talk"; "we have to make sound for them, so we twirl a bullroarer". This is called, in translation, the "shout side", because, informants explain, "those two *jelmalandji* couldn't speak, and we have to make own language for them". Orthodox versions stress that the *jelmalandji* are the two Snakes, the male and female Julunggul,[3] standing up looking about after having swallowed the Wauwalak and the child, and talking to other Pythons on the Wessels and elsewhere.
773
The *murlk* or hut, also called *bambu:la* (a very sacred term), is not
778 used to any extent in the Kunapipi, but it is present in both the
796 *djunggawon* and the *ngu:rlmak*. As well as being the hut in which the

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346 [3] In central-western Northern Territory these *jelmalandji* are said to represent both the Fertility Mother and the Rainbow Snake (a superimposition of the snake on the Mother); at Birrundudu, the *jelmalandji* had pearl-shell eyes, and other decorations. And in some versions (see later) one *jelmalandji* is the Snake, and the other the "cabbage" palm growing at Muruwul (the latter serves to symbolize the Julunggul).

of invocation.] Most of the actors are smeared thickly with wallaby 796
or kangaroo grease, and then with red-ochre. When they become hot 536
from dancing the grease runs and drips off them, symbolizing the [302]
sweat of a pair of totemic animals (or human beings) after coitus.
The shining grease is termed *laklak*, which is an alternate name for
the younger Wauwalak sister.

When the second new moon appears from the beginning of the 796
Kunapipi, depending, of course, on the proposed length of the ceremony, the men again go out to the sacred ground. Warner (*op. cit.* 778
p. 301) mentions that the Muruwul well (or *nanggaru*) is abandoned [805]
at this stage; but in the eastern counterparts witnessed and discussed,
it is retained. This appears to depend mainly on the inclination of the Kunapipi leaders, who at Yirrkalla usually take their pattern from Rose River. A large crescent-shaped trench is dug, the *ba'uma* (also called *kanala*, or *kanalaru*, the central-western Northern Territory term). This is an extremely important symbol in the Kunapipi. It is usually about ten to twelve feet long, four to five feet deep, and about four feet wide, with earth piled along its concave sides. And it may signify any of the following: the track mark of the female Julunggul; the mark left by her fall, after swallowing the Wauwalak; the crescent-shaped position in which the Wauwalak rested in their *murlk*, before the Snake swallowed them; the clitoris of the Wauwalak; and, its real "inside" meaning, the uterus of the Wauwalak (as a substitute for the Djanggawul Fertility Mothers). Another smaller hole is also dug during some ceremonies; this is called the "younger hole", the uterus of the younger sister, whereas the larger *ba'uma*, also called *da:p* (or *dapi*, foreskin, symbolizing a dilly-bag or uterus), is the uterus of the elder sister. But the principal hole is the *ba'uma*, and is always present in the Kunapipi.

When the *ba'uma* is completed, snake totem actors dance or writhe 796
in the hole. Then two actors, one representing a man and another a
woman, dance the "mating dance". The man has an erect bark penis 831
and moves in pursuit of the "woman", who is desirous of coitus: 535
they move towards the trench and dance around it, and at its entrance
they simulate sexual intercourse. The Mother is said to be present
in the *ba'uma*, and her life-giving powers are made operative by the [776]
sexual actions of the two dancers. ("The acting of coitus by the totemites is like the uterus being fertilized": the Mother is having sexual intercourse, so that she may produce.)

Various other dances are held in the *ba'uma*, at which the young initiates are present; the majority are related to coitus. There is, for example, the *dari:t* dance. Two men, representing male and female wagtails, sit opposite each other in the trench with legs folded beneath them; their knees touch, and in the dancing they simulate coitus. There is also the *molit'manina* (*molit* being an alternate name for Julunggul) dance, of the male and female Julunggul Rock

796 see the young initiates coming out of the bushes, emerging from the
uterus, all covered with red-ochre that symbolizes "the spring blood
881 of the Wauwalak". And the men call out to the women saying, "See
778 those young men covered with the saliva of that Snake"; "but really,"
and the women are not officially supposed to know this, "they are
covered with the spring blood". The women begin to call out, and
return dancing to the main camp.

The *djepalmandji* are knocked down, and the young boys are taken to the men's camp. That night, "outside" Kunapipi songs are sung, and the men dance around the boys. Then with the men leading, and the initiates following, they all dance off in single file to the sacred ground.

Here the initiates' headbands are removed, and returned to the
Kunapipi leader for use in the next rituals. After some sacred singing,
[302] all the men, together with the young boys, paint themselves
completely with red-ochre; at the same time, in the main camp, all
the other men, women and children, whether *dua* or *jiritja*, do likewise.
On everyone's back is outlined the Julunggul Snake, "so that
[532] you can't see it". (The snake design is merged with the general red-ochring,
so that only a bare outline is visible.) This design is sometimes
extended across the chest or breasts, from left to right, to join
the main snake pattern on the back; "in the beginning those Wauwalak
did this, because of that big Julunggul". This painting is
termed the "baptizing" (that is, ceremonial purification), and all are
brushed with smoking ironwood branches which have been held in
the fire.

The men return from the sacred ground to the main camp, and sitting in groups begin to sing the "outside" Kunapipi, while the women dance in the same way as they did during the first rituals. The young initiates return that evening to the single men's camp. The purification ceremony and singing may be held on succeeding evenings for about a week to a fortnight, when it is felt that sufficient precautions have been taken to prevent sickness.

This concludes the Yirrkalla Kunapipi ritual.

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773 Although we shall return in succeeding chapters to the ritual and
796 interpretation of the Kunapipi, it may be as well, at this juncture, to
survey briefly the foregoing material. It is apparent that Kunapipi
794 ritual has been closely related to the Wauwalak mythology; this
expresses symbolically the aborigines' conception of an "eternal"
[805] sequence of the seasons, and the reproductive faculties of Nature, of
which man is an incidental but dominating feature. This fundamental
[776] belief is crystallized in a Fertility Mother (the Wauwalak as a transmutation
of the Djanggawul) who embodies this concept, while the
male representative of fructification also is present.

7: Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952

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## Chapter One

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DJANGGAWUL

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DJANGGAWUL, used collectively, is a name given to three Ancestral Beings; alternatively, it may be Djangga or Djangg'gau. Usually it refers to two Sisters and a Brother, although in the Milingimbi version the latter is not mentioned.[1] In north-eastern Arnhem Land, as in the version presented in this volume, the Brother and his two Sisters are always represented. The Brother, known by himself as Djanggawul, is also called, less frequently, Ganjudingu.[2] His 'inside'[3] name is Gundanguru, which means the 'nail' or spike of a 'nail' fish; an alternative 'inside' name is Balwadjar, which has a similar meaning. The elder Sister is Bildjiwuraroiju (or Bildjiwuraru), a name derived from the sacred term *duldjijuldji*, meaning the point of the sacred *mauwulan rangga* emblem.[4] She has the alternative names of Reiwurjun, meaning, 'getting tired (after long paddling)', and referring to the Djanggawul's paddling from Bralgu to the Australian mainland; and of Ganinjara, which means also the point of the *mauwulan* (its point enters her vagina, for the *mauwulan* is a symbolic penis).

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[1] The presence of the Djanggawul Brother is not mentioned by L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 333–40.

[2] The Milingimbi version calls the elder Sister Djanggawul (said to be a derivation of the name Gurulgurul, belonging to a *wongar* Dreaming man at Bralgu); the younger Sister is said to be called Ganjudingu (meaning the fin of the barramundi fish). Collectively they were also called Maijilwara, which is a 'big' name.

[3] The use of 'inside' terms is confined to sacred songs; they may also be called on the sacred ground during ritual. Normally, they are used only by men fully acquainted with the relevant ideology, and very rarely in ordinary conversation.

[4] Also said to mean 'a long clitoris dragging'.

[831]

## *Significance of the Djanggawul*

● 776 The younger Sister is usually called Miralaidj, Malalait or Mandalaidj, which means the 'younger' green-backed turtle called *deirel*. 773 She is also called Djurdjunga, 'clouds coming up', or Balmabalma, which means a 'sacred shade' used on the ritual *nara* ground; this latter has the 'inside' name Mal'marangu.

In the north-eastern Arnhem Land version these three are accompanied by Bralbral (or Barabara), who stands in relationship to them as *waridj* or *mari*, a mother's mother's brother's son's son. He has no other name, and appears only at the beginning of the myth and the song cycle.

773 Although these three principal Ancestral Beings are brother and sisters, one version of this story tells that the Brother Djanggawul 831 had in the beginning only one Sister, Bildjiwuraroiju and that it was through his incestuous intercourse with her that Miralaidj was born. Miralaidj did not, however, call Bildjiwuraroiju and her brother mother and father: instead she called them respectively elder sister and brother. That is, 'one Sister came out from the big Sister; and this younger one called the other one sister because she came out first, long before Bildjiwuraroiju gave birth to the children who are said to be the direct ancestors of the Aborigines living to-day'. But Djanggawul had coitus with the younger Sister who actually, according to this version, is his own daughter. This incestuous behaviour is nothing unusual, for in the myth the Brother often has coitus with his two Sisters. To all intents and purposes, Bildjiwuraroiju and Miralaidj are treated as Sisters.

773 These Beings came from a far distant country, and on the way to the Arnhem Land mainland stopped at Bralgu, the *dua* moiety island of the dead. Bralgu is a mythical place, but some native informants say that it may perhaps be an island near Mornington (one of the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria), or alternatively an island off the Cape York Peninsula.[1] To-day its geographical position remains unclarified, and it is still the Home of the Eternal Spirits, the spirits of departed ancestors as well as of those Beings who were there when the Djanggawul themselves visited the island. It is said, too, that the Djanggawul possessed at that time a far greater number of sacred objects, but because they had only a bark canoe to get to the Australian mainland they were obliged to leave many behind.

773 The ultimate origin of the Djanggawul is now shrouded in antiquity, and it is fruitless to hypothesize. They are said, however, 821 to be closely associated with the Sun. One myth tells that the Sun,

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[1] Or, at Milingimbi, said to be near Mapoon Mission station off Cape York Peninsula. This place was suggested by informants who were attempting to place Bralgu in relation to some known site, indicating that it was somewhere in that direction.

a woman, possessed two daughters who were later to become 773
the Djanggawul Sisters. But while the Yirrkalla myth and song 921
cycle do not refer directly to them as Sun daughters, many symbolic references are made to the sun and to its warmth; in fact, the whole concept of the myth, with the growth of human beings and trees, and so on, depends on the presence of the Sun, through the agency of the Two Sisters. In the Milingimbi version this aspect is treated in great detail, if somewhat symbolically; one is left in no doubt as to who the two Sisters really were, and their affinity with the Sun. For example, the feathered strings from the *lindaridj* parakeet which they carried were symbolic of the sun's rays; they travelled from east to west, as the sun itself travels, and from their vulvae the sun's rays spread, while to-day one name for the disc of the [831]
midday sun is *dagu, gambai* or *dala*, meaning the Djanggawul Sisters' vulvae or vaginae.

There is little doubt, then, that the Sisters, if not the Brother, 776
are projections of the Sun. If they are not Sun Goddesses themselves, they are closely linked with the Sun. The question of whether or not it is legitimate to describe certain Aboriginal Ancestral Beings as gods and goddesses raises, of course, a number of problems. Nevertheless, these particular Ancestral Beings are themselves divine in that they possess creative abilities, and are sacred in the full sense of the word. From this point of view, the appellation 'god' or 'goddess' is in order; but by using it we do not in any way imply that these Aboriginal Ancestral Beings, or the sacred emblems they brought with them, are worshipped in the Christian sense. The concept of 'worshipping' is far removed from [782]
conventional Aboriginal religious thought: things or Beings are held in reverence, or even in awe, but never worshipped in the way that we understand the term. Our choice of a title for these Beings, however, endowed as they are with all the attributes which go to form the idea of Godhead, is primarily a matter of terminology.

These Beings brought with them to the Arnhem Land coast 773
a variety of sacred emblems, which are material symbols of their
cult. First and foremost was the *ngainmara* mat, alternatively called 778
*muralungul, dalwuldalwul* or *wagulwagul*; the latter term applies particularly to the mat's 'mouth' or opening. *Ngainmara* is a secular term, with *nania* as another alternative. This mat is the symbolic [831]
uterus of either Sister, but it may also mean the whale, or simply a mat. Its attributes were so sacred, representing as it did the Uteri 778
of the Djanggawul, that it is no longer endowed with ritual value; it has passed generally into the society, and is used primarily by women. That is to say, its sacredness was of such intensity that it could not be kept for use in ceremonies alone, but became an

preliminary to pregnancy. Children in this area, for instance, are 831
called *judu* (*jutu*, usually employed in a singular sense), or *djamarguli* 842
(plural). The former word means 'semen'; that is, the child originated
from the semen. The latter means 'through (or from) work'; to
'work' (*djama*) a female is to have coitus, and *djamarguli* is literally
the 'result of working (or coitus)'.

Erotic references, then, in the Djanggawul cult merely conform 831
to the accepted pattern. To say that the Aborigine is concerned
unduly with the subject of sex, and derives a morbid satisfaction 182
from constant direct or symbolic reference to it, it to distort the 794
actual position. He is frankly interested in the workings of the human body, and in the satisfaction of its basic needs; and he recognizes the fundamental importance of the act, not only in ensuring the continuation of life, but also in helping to stabilize relations between members of both sexes, through their very interdependence. It is not unexpected, therefore, to find manifestations of this interest in Aboriginal religious emblems and mythology, ritual and song. Indeed, what more obvious means of expression could a simple group of people have? Here, in the Djanggawul doctrine, are crystallized their hopes and desires, related to their fundamental drives, co-ordinated with the natural resources and phenomena and with the environment which they know.

Numerous references are made to the removal of the *rangga* 778
from the *ngainmara*, a symbolic allusion also to the removal of
children from the wombs of the Sisters: for *rangga* are likened 773
to children, or human beings, and men and women may use this 182
term to refer to their bones. The spiritual content of the bones is the same as that of the sacred *rangga*, and has, moreover, been passed on from their ancestors—those who were originally removed from the Sisters. When, for example, postulants enter the sacred hut (= *ngainmara* = uterus) on the ritual ground, they are like
*rangga* being hidden away within the *ngainmara*. In a polygynous [595]
marriage, too, the wives are said to be like *rangga*: their husband
has collected them into a group, and has a monopoly over them as
a man has over his individual *rangga*. This likening of women to [562]
sacred *rangga* is interesting, but probably derives from the fact that
women themselves are said to be the source of ritual knowledge,[1] and consequently sacred.

There is much stress, too, on the maternal qualities of the 831
Djanggawul Sisters, although the Brother himself is of considerable
importance. The Two Sisters are mentioned far more frequently, 776
particularly in the Milingimbi version of the cycle, although this

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[1] *Vide* Chapters 2 and 3. (See also M. Mead, *Male and Female*, London, 1950, pp. 102-5.)

831 is a predominantly patrilineal society. The Two Sisters are Original
Mothers of the various *dua* moiety clansfolk, as well as of the
776 *jiritja*. They are Mother Goddesses in the true sense of the term,
for although they were allegedly instrumental in populating the
greater part of eastern Arnhem Land, they are responsible also for
all subsequent fertility. Aborigines call the Sisters 'Our Mothers'.
When men cut the fringe of their sacred dilly bags, or perform
ritual, they are the 'Sons of the Djanggawul'; when they enter the
sacred ground, marked out in a special way, they are returning
to their Mothers' uteri; when they enter the sacred hut on the
ritual ground, they are also returning to their Mothers' uteri (or
uterus, when one hut is used, referring to the elder Sister). The
same theme is expressed symbolically in a variety of ways. The
whole concept of the return to the Mother on ritual occasions is
particularly interesting;[1] but we shall not digress to discuss the
theoretical interpretation, as favoured by some modern psycho-
analytic schools of thought.

173 The most important focal point of interest in the Djanggawul
myth and songs is procreation, and its ramifications. In some draw-
532 ings from Yirrkalla the Two Sisters are depicted with people (or
831 children) 'flowing' out from their vulvae. Their legs are apart and
flexed, their eyes open with tears running from the pain of child-
776 birth. This concept of people flowing from the Mothers' uteri is
used in western-central Northern Territory in reference to the
Kunapipi Mother,[2] who is also said to 'let postulants out from her
womb during ceremonial time'. (This same theme is expressed,
both symbolically and directly, at Yirrkalla and Millingimbi.) The
relationship between the Djanggawul and the Kunapipi Mother is
an interesting question, which unfortunately cannot be treated
here.[3]

831 The Djanggawul were possessed of abnormally long genitalia.
The Brother had an elongated penis, emphasizing, through exaggera-
776 tion, his masculine function in the fertility scheme. The Two
Sisters had abnormally long clitorises,[4] a feature more difficult to
explain. The Aborigines themselves offer no explanation, except
that the *rangga* may have been derived from them. For example,
when the penis and clitorises were eventually foreshortened, the

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[1] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Kunapipi*.

[2] *Vide* R. Berndt, *op. cit.*, Chapters II–IV, IX, and R. and C. Berndt, 'The Eternal Ones of the Dream' (being a discussion of Dr. G. Róheim's book of that name), *Oceania*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 67–78, three plates.

[3] Some mention has been made of this in *Kunapipi*, Chapters I *c* and III.

[4] *Vide* Chapters 2 and 3. The significance of the Sisters' clitorises is revealed in the songs.

severed parts became *rangga* or feathered strings, which are also 831
regarded as *rangga*. An interesting interpretation was made by one 776
informant, himself a ceremonial leader. Within historic times, he
said, a certain man was born with both vagina and penis, and with
breasts like a woman; he was bi-sexual and produced a child, after
which he died. Commenting on this example, which was told to
him by a grandparent, the informant suggested that these Djanggawul
Sisters may have originally been bi-sexual, so that their clitorises
were actually penes which they used to impregnate themselves
by inserting into the vagina; for the 'clitoris-penes' were sufficiently
long to curve round and use for coitus. The same informant stated
that the Djanggawul Brother may possibly have been introduced
later. This is, however, the tentative interpretation of one man,
and does not represent group opinion.

The presence of elongated clitorises can possibly be explained 831
in terms of the tendency to accentuate a female organ (as has been 776
done in the case of the male); or they may, symbolically, represent
the umbilical cord (as in the Song Cycle). The former explanation 833
seems to be more probable, for much stress is placed on the erectness 839
of a woman's clitoris during coitus,[1] while the clitorises of many
Aboriginal women are fairly well developed; they are played with
and handled by women from pre-adolescent days, in an endeavour
to increase their size, so attracting the attentions of men and
heightening their sexual satisfaction. In other drawings from the 831
Yirrkalla area, the Djanggawul Sisters have long clitorises, dragging
on the ground. In one illustration we see the Two Sisters with 532
elongated clitorises, and the Brother with his long penis; they are 776
holding *rangga*, and people are coming out to be placed on a
*ngainmara* mat. The same drawing shows the Wauwalak Sisters,[2]
who are the daughters of the Djanggawul, while the Brother puts
his hand into the Sisters' wombs to remove the people. The Brother's
inserting his hand into the uteri, to remove the people (children),
is compared with his putting his hand into the *ngainmara* to remove
the sacred *rangga*. Further, it suggests that the Sisters did not
invariably give birth to such people in the normal way. The
Brother's action in inserting his hand merely accentuates the theme
by introducing a further point, which can be more easily represented
in symbolism—that is, by the *rangga* and *ngainmara*, illustrating
the phenomenon of childbirth.

Professor Lloyd Warner was the first to note the presence of the 114
Djanggawul (which he called Djunkgao) cult, presenting this 794

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[1] *Vide* R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, for publication.

[2] The Wauwalak Sisters sponsor all *Kunapipi*, *ngurlmag* and *djunggawon* ritual. *Vide* R. Berndt, *Kunapipi*, Chapters I *c*, III and IV.

this does not apply to the Baijini, who are said also to have been 773
present on the Djanggawul's arrival.

The Baijini, although partially mythological are, rather, historical; 773
for they are said to have been the pre-Macassans, primarily traders
and aliens to the coast, and not in any way creative as were the 178
Djanggawul. They are, however, treated in the myth as if contem-
porary with these Ancestral Beings. This inconsistency, which does 182
not conform to other data relating to the Baijini, seems to be a projection of the historical into the mythological past, and for this the necessity for oral transmission, with its reliance on individual narrators, must be held partly responsible. Although an interesting feature, and one which illustrates the flexibility of traditional mythology handed on in this way, contrary material shows that it must be regarded as an introduced element. This being so, one may wonder how many other elements, not apparent to the anthropologist, have been incorporated through the centuries. Alien words or concepts, of course, may be found in many traditional songs and stories, and are not especially apparent in the great Djanggawul cycle. The inclusion of the Baijini, and for that matter of Laintjung, is quite logical from the Aboriginal point of view. It widens the sacred perspective of the *dua*, bringing it, so to speak, up to date; for their religion is a living faith, the scope of which must be broad enough to include all facets of the contemporary situation. Moreover, it serves to explain why the *dua* may use black charcoal when painting their sacred clan designs, and why the *jiritja* may use certain *dua* possessions, such as red feathered string from the *lindaridj* parakeet. In this way it correlates *dua* and *jiritja* belief; and it gives sacred sanction to the *dua* for their use of black colouring, an important consideration from a ritual point of view.

There is another inconsistency, too. We are told that the Djangga- 773
wul are creative, and thus 'super-human': they are, virtually,
Goddesses and a God; and yet they behave in very much the same 776
way that human beings do to-day. They are, that is, made in the 182
image of man; but they are not answerable to man. When they behave in a super-human way—in their creative feats, in the miraculous reappearance of the younger Sister after being killed by sorcery, in their possession of elongated clitorises and penis—they are projections of human wishes and ideals, possessed of qualities which these Aborigines find particularly attractive or important. Such projection, however, may take place only at a subconscious level; the repressed desire for incestuous relations, for example, severely prohibited in everyday life, finds an outlet in mythology. The Djanggawul Sisters represent an ideal of Arnhem Land womanhood —ever bountiful, ever fertile: for this aspect is paramount in the

773 society of north-eastern and north-central Arnhem Land, which
776 places considerable stress on female fertility among both human
182 beings and natural species.

On the whole, however, the Djanggawul are very much like ordinary mortals. They depend on natural resources for food and sustenance; they must walk in order to traverse the country, and use canoes to cross the sea and rivers; they enjoy the satisfaction of coitus, the warmth of the sun and of fire; they sing and perform ritual. Moreover, their super-human powers do not seem to avail them when forced to alter their direction because of a *jiritja* moiety dreaming, or to move their camp, as in the case of the *jiritja* spring water at Elcho Island; or in the case of sorcery, as when Miralaidj was killed. The myth, then, deals with Beings whose behaviour, although they are super-human, approximates that of ordinary man. The myth is correlated with a way of life that the Aborigines know and appreciate, and consequently has a greater hold on their emotions; it involves a faith of which the adherents include all members of the society. The sacred aura of the Djanggawul extends over man, woman and child, bringing them all within the sphere of its religious expression, as manifested in the songs and the ritual.

Another feature is the segregation of the sexes when, in the myth,
773 female children are placed under the *ngainmara* mat, and male
182 children in the coarse grass. This reflects the Aborigine's assumption
that man's rôle in life is rough, his activities are more strenuous
562 than those of women, he takes the initiative in fighting, and alto-
gether carries out the heavier work. His skin too is coarser, from
[826] his original exposure by the Djanggawul, while the contact with
grass resulted in his growing facial hair. Women, on the other hand, were handled with greater care, protected from the harsh glare of the sun, from the rough ground and the grass. Because of this initial treatment, they are supposed to-day to be soft and yielding, with no facial and the minimum of body hair; and they are not, in theory, expected to carry out strenuous work. In reality, however, they are not the demure and submissive creatures idealized in this section of the myth. When the occasion demands, they can undertake equally difficult and strenuous activities, and possibly have greater endurance than men over a period. Nevertheless, the myth implies that they should in some measure conserve their strength to expend in sexual intercourse and childbearing. This twofold distinction between the sexes, on both physical and psychological grounds, is fundamental in local thought, with important effects on expected and actual behaviour. It is most interesting that we should find it expressed, in these terms, in a myth which purports to offer explanations of basic drives in Aboriginal society.

## Chapter Six

# COMMENTS ON PART ONE OF THE SONGS

This first section of the saga introduces us to the Djanggawul 539 and their companion Bralbral, and sets the stage for succeeding parts. It purports to show their immediate origin, and tells how the sacred *rangga* emblems and the mat were brought to the Arnhem Land coast.

The Djanggawul leave the Spirit Land of Bralgu, and paddle across to Port Bradshaw in their bark canoe. They are guided by the rays of the Morning Star, and in the light from this they see various creatures; it is only in the final songs (21–4) that the Star light gives place to that of the sun. In these colourful songs, the north-eastern Arnhem Landers suggest that the Djanggawul have travelled all the way from Bralgu in a kind of twilight, but as they reach the mainland the sun arises, warming them and illuminating various sacred sites (Song 24). This implies, subtly, their association with the sun.

Song 24 treats the sun as a separate identity, although we have 539 seen (in Chapters 2 and 3) that there is, in fact, a close association, 776 if not complete identification. Line 20, Song 24 speaks of 'Its red glow . . . from the sacred parakeet feathers . . .' This refers to the red glow below the sun, seen as it rises. It is said that the sun [821] is a *dua* moiety woman, and this glow is from her waist-band of human hair string (*ngadiba*) into which are woven red breast feathers from the *lindaridj* parakeet. They were given her by the Djanggawul Brother himself, and when in the sky she always wears this belt. The Djanggawul Brother calls her *gadu* (that is, daughter, man speaking), although in other versions the Brother may call her *ngandi* 'mother', for the Sun Woman's two daughters may be

539 identified with the Djanggawul Sisters (*vide* Chapters 2 and 3). 776 The red parakeet feathered string is a material representation of the sun's rays, which it symbolizes when attached as a pendant to a *rangga*, and spread out like the rays; the red feathers are said to [821] represent the heat of the sun. The Sun Woman not only wears the feathered waist-band; she also travels across the sky with the aid of the *mauwulan rangga* (see Song 24, line 3), which she uses as walking sticks, and to which are attached feathered pendants. Identification of these red parakeet feathers with the sun's rays extends throughout the cycle. It symbolizes the concept of fertility, for the small red breast feathers are said to be like children, each individual feather being a 'child'; and they represent the warmth necessary for natural increase to take place.

539 Lines 26 and 27 of the same song (24) express this idea—'Rays like the parakeet-feathered string of our *rangga*! Feathered string like our child! Red glow of the sun. Rays warming our backs, like feathered string! Like feathered *rangga*!' That is, the parakeet-feathered strings are attached to the *djuda rangga* pole and likened to (or identified with) the rays of the sun. The sun is said to 'carry the *djuda* (tree) *rangga* always, as if carrying a baby.' This reference expresses the underlying theme of the Djanggawul doctrine. The *rangga* object is regarded as a child, and is here called *wagu* (that is, *guliwona wagun—vide* text), which is the term used for sister's child (man speaking), or own child (woman speaking). That is to say, the Djanggawul Brother is calling the *rangga wagu*, the child of either Sister, Miralaidj or Bildjiwuraroiju; and they call the *rangga* by the same term. The *rangga* are carried in the *ngainmara* mat, symbolically the uterus of either Sister. They are the Djanggawul's children, by virtue of their presence in the wombs of the Sisters (that is, *rangga* kept in the *ngainmara*): *rangga* approximate children or people (see previous chapters). The *djuda rangga* are sacred poles, from which spring living trees: the association of the sun with these (that is, their feathered strings, likened to sun's rays) suggests how essential the sun is to the growth of trees and foliage. When the sun extends its rays to various sacred sites, lighting up the whole country of north-eastern Arnhem Land (see Song 24) it leaves its material substance at Elcho Island, crystallized in the form of red ochre (line 36). It extends as far as the western tribes on the boundary of the north-eastern-north-central Arnhem Land cultural bloc (lines 37–8), to country on the mainland behind Milingimbi, in the Barara *mala* ('Seagull' linguistic group) of the Bara *mala* ('North-west wind' clan), covering territory known as Burulmura. It reaches out, lighting up and warming all the places through which the Djanggawul are later to travel.

619 with other adjacent groups. On the border line between western
184 and eastern Arnhem Land there are tribes affiliated with the
eastern people, but retaining their own distinct cultural pattern.
Apart from the linguistic variations between the eastern and
western groups, and the tribal organisation of the one and the
clan-linguistic group set-up of the other, the principal difference
[611] lies in the eastern form of mainly patrilineal descent and the
western pattern of descent through the mother.

The moiety is the most important feature in the social organ-
184 isation of the Wulamba people of the east and south-east. It serves
616 to classify under these two main headings all clans and linguistic
groups, the known universe, and the whole life of the people,
and affiliates all those belonging to the same moiety. The moieties
are exogamous, and are thus the basis upon which marriage rules
depend.

184 In western Arnhem Land we find the moiety-phratry arrange-
ment (related to the totem) now influenced from the south by
615 the subsection system, which is widely spread throughout
616 Aboriginal Australia. Another feature here is the *namanamaidj*,
611 which establishes a child's affinity with his father's group. This,
together with tribal and linguistic membership, is patrilineal;
[617] but the descent of the moiety, phratry (and totem), and sub-
section, is matrilineal.

184 In eastern Arnhem Land the subsections have not yet been
fully co-ordinated with the kinship structure, and many of the
617 older people do not use them. Normally, however, the sub-
601 sections are based on a system of marriage and descent, and are
essentially a matter of kinship organisation. They group various
relatives together under one term, in such a way that for general
purposes all kinship terms are reduced to eight; and since there
are eight divisions in this subsection system, four belong to one
moiety, and four to the other.[1]

221 The eastern Arnhem Landers possess certain fundamental
features in common with most other Australian Aboriginal com-
munities. Away from European settlements, for instance, they
are hunters and collectors who must forage for their food. On
221 the northern and eastern coast of Arnhem Land food is certainly
796 abundant and varied, but its constant supply depends on the
776

rhythm of the seasons and (so these people believe) on the 221
mythical characters of the "Eternal Dreaming" period. To ensure 796
an adequate and constant supply of animal and vegetable food 776
the eastern Arnhem Landers rely on their great ceremonial
cycles – the *djunggawon*, *kunapipi*, *ngurlmag*, and the *dua* and *jiritja* moiety *nara*. These rituals are connected with the most important Ancestral Beings (like Djanggawul, Wauwalak, Laindjung, Banaidja and Baijini) and serve as the basis of the indigenous religion.

In the west the pattern is much the same. The Ancestral or Spirit Beings have different names, but their function is similar to that of their eastern variants. There is, for instance, a Fertility Mother named Amungundji, or Waramurunggoindju. With her husband, Wuraggag, she is the guardian of and the essence behind all the sacred ritual, such as the *maraiin*, and the age-grading *ubar* ceremonies. The ceremonies have also a mass of separate mythology, associated with Jurawadpad, the Snake man, but they are indirectly associated with the Fertility Mother.

All this ritual, however, is not concerned merely with the provision of food. Its purpose is primarily to ensure the continuation 796
of the human species, and the increase of all other animals, birds, fish, vegetables and so on is a secondary matter. It is concerned with the fructification of all living things, of which human beings (in their own estimation, at least) are the most important.

We cannot discuss here even briefly the doctrines and ritual expressions of the various religious cults of western and eastern Arnhem Land: for although a fundamental thesis is common to them all, there are many local manifestations. That is to say, there are a number of different religious cults, each having its special mythology associated with Creative Beings; and their ceremonies, although often similar, differ in many respects. Some are concerned principally with the initiation of youths into the adult ceremonial sphere, and their gradual acceptance into the realm of the sacred. As a young man grows older, and passes through successive stages in his initiation, the religious life of his elders is slowly revealed to him. These particular series are termed age-grading rituals. But there are other ceremonies in which only fully initiated men may participate, and whose significance is

000 the Indonesians generally, and today their bad points are overlooked and the old days romanticised.

Dr Thomson (in *Recommendations of Policy in Native Affairs in the Northern Territory of Australia*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1937-38, p. 7) states: "Not only had the Malay or Macassar influence among these people extended over a very long period, but that these early voyagers who visited the North Australian coast each year with the north-west monsoon, were able to work with the natives of the Arnhem Land coast, to exert a profound influence upon their culture, which remains today, and to leave behind them a tradition of respect which the white man has unhappily not been able to inspire in his subsequent dealings with these people".

[24] Dr Thomson (*Report on Expedition to Arnhem Land*, 1936-37, Commonwealth of Australia, 1939, p. 12) has something to say on one aspect of this subject: "But an example of the danger of interference by strangers and the complications that may arise from ignorance of customary behaviour, was brought to my notice when a man in coming to me with a complaint about the Japanese invaders on the reserve told me that they knew no shame, for not only did they openly solicit women, but they solicited a woman in the presence of her brother. This is an incomprehensible thing to a native, the penalty for which would be death—although in the native society itself it is inconceivable that such a thing ever could occur".

*Vide* L. Warner, *op. cit.* p. 467.

● 776 [25] This conventionalised segregation of the sexes at Groote Eylandt, in the old pre-Mission days, is associated with the Spirit Woman Wuratilagu. She also made an appearance on the mainland, but her cult did not flourish there. However, she has been accepted and identified with another female spirit, and today is the subject of a long song cycle.

114 [26] Professor Warner (*op. cit.* p. 468) insists that (in 1926-29) alien contact made little impression on indigenous life. One must remember that most of his field work was carried out in the Milingimbi region and not in the north-eastern corner, centred about Yirrkalla, where there was then no Mission station. Even so, it is difficult to understand such statements as these: "It is surprising to the investigator to find little evidence of miscegenation among the blacks and Malays in north-east Arnhem Land". And "since the rapacious civilisation of the West cannot produce half-castes in this region, it is less probable that the more gentle Malay culture would produce racial hybrids in North Australia". "The influence of the Malay race and culture has not been important in north-eastern Arnhem Land. There are but slight traces of hybridisation in race or culture. The greatest influence is found in the material culture. and the least in the social institutions of Murngin (a term which Professor Warner uses for these people) civilisation. Compared with the total number of traits found in Aboriginal culture, those added from the more eastern civilisation are very

MAN, JUNE, 1961 PLATE

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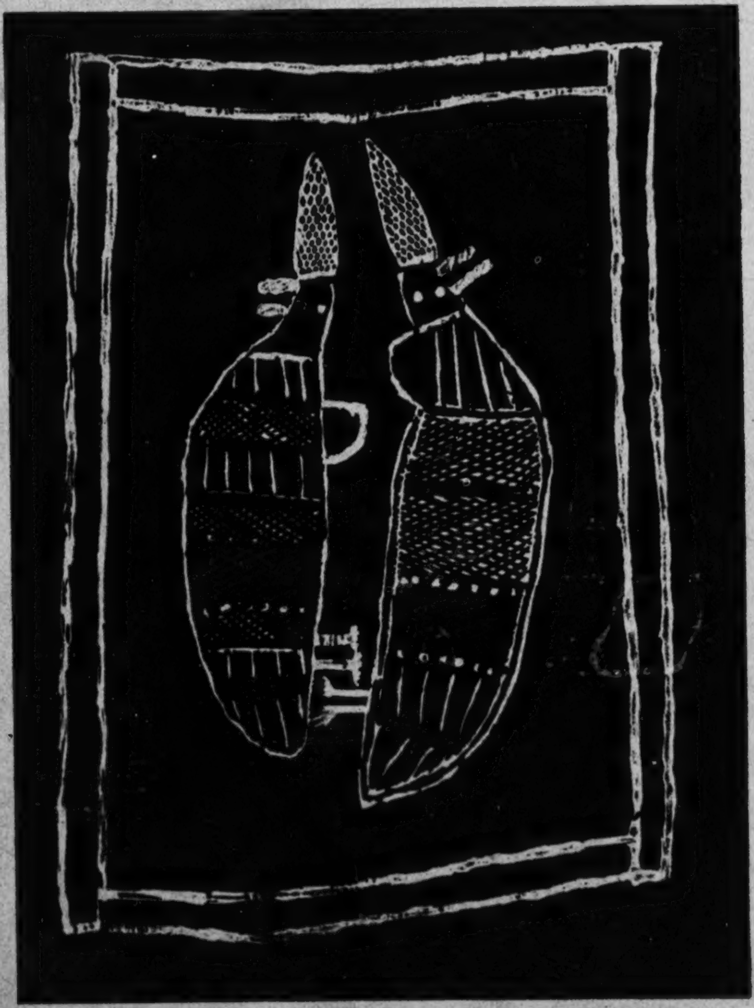

THE TWO 'MARRNGIT' OF MEDICINEMAN WATTIYA, DRAWN BY HIMSELF

*Left, the spirit familiar Burrutamoi, right, Kanyirtinga. The white, cross-hatched areas on the heads of the figures represent hair, the lateral projectio ears, and the two small circles on the neck region eyes; the cross-hatching on the bodies represents body hair* (dauwur, *as distinct from* marra, *the h of the head). Wattiya said: that each* marrngit *has a stone* (kunda) *embedded in its sternum* (kumur), *which provides its driving force, and that th force is distinct from its* marr, *spiritual power; that the stone is 'like the wing of a bird'* (nakum binbar warrakan); *that they represent the mal shadow or shade, 'half* birimbir, nakum mordoi,' i.e. *half spirit, like a ghost, like the ghost from a dead person; and, in explanation of their way movement, 'it does not go on foot'* (yakka diango djalkirri maritja).

532 131 The drawings in polychrome from north-
756 eastern Arnhem Land that accompany this
paper¹ were made on sheets of stringy bark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) by three medicinemen, called *marrngitmirri*, members of Mildjingi clan of the lower Glyde River, and of two neighbouring clans, Liagauwumirr' and Ngalladar
617 Tjambarpoingo. Mildjingi is a clan of *yiritja* moiety and Liagauwumirr' and Tjambarpoingo are members of the opposite moiety, *dua*, in which certain terminal vowels, notably *i* and *o* are elided as an arbitrary mark of distinction
[187] between clans of different moieties whose members speak similar languages. In Wanguri clan of the Arnhem Bay area the word *kulong* is applied to the medicineman.

● 776 In each case the figures drawn by the medicineman
787 represent the spirits called *marrngit*, two or more in number, which adopt certain men, often first subjecting
756 them to an ordeal or series of ordeals, after which they are known as *marrngitmirri*—medicinemen—and are vested with the special powers of this cult.

The *marrngit* or spirit familiars of two of the three medicinemen from eastern Arnhem Land who claimed to be *marrngitmirri* are shown in Plates I and Ja. These *marrngit* were said first to have visited the men whom they later adopted, subjecting them to a series of ordeals. Sometimes they brought sickness, in other cases, according to my informants, they inflicted injuries, sometimes actually breaking bones and almost killing the novice, after which they restored him and then invited the initiate in turn to try his own skill by injuring the *marrngit* and restoring him. After a more or less lengthy period of trial by way of initiation, the *marrngit* finally adopted the *marrngitmirri* and thenceforth helped and guided him in the practice of the cult.

756 According to most of my informants, the cult of the *marrngitmirri* or medicineman in eastern Arnhem Land is restricted to men only, although it is not a sacred cult and is not secret—that is, it does not depend upon ritual or supernatural backing, and is carried out in open camp without any secrecy, in the presence of women and children. Many of the *marrngit*, the spirit familiars them-
[776] selves, were said by my informants to be females. Although women do not appear to become *marrngitmirri* they do
[791 practise as rainmakers. Some of the rainmakers of east
562] Arnhem Land, of whom there were three in Mildjingi clan—the clan of Wilindjango—were women, one of whom was renowned for her prowess with the rites and magical spells of the rainmaker. However, although rain-
[788] making depends upon the understanding and correct observance of certain rituals and the use of the appropriate

* *With Plates I and J*

[p. 97(B)]

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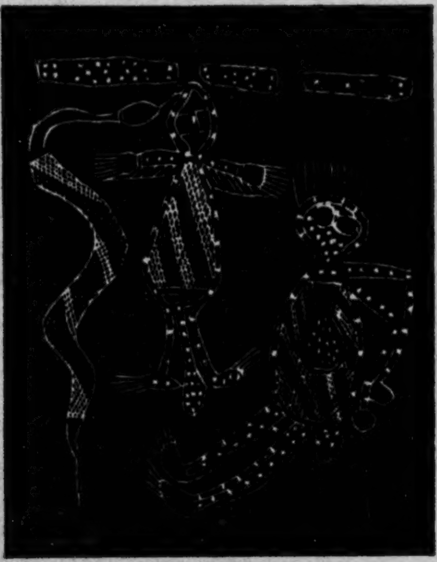
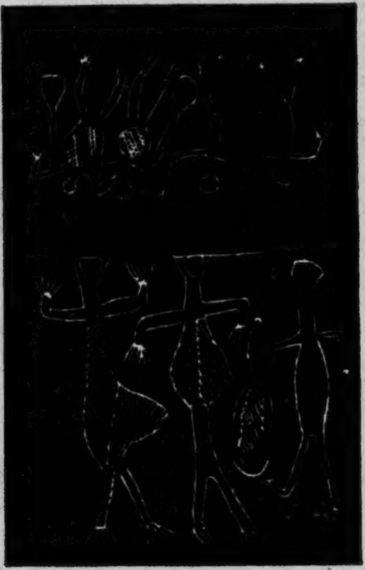


*(a) Marrngit of Mun'nyeri'nyir of Tjamparpoingo clan. The three flat objects at the top are stones, with holes represented by spots. The winged male* marrngit *is Mallagurrpallamirr, the other his wife (and sister) Barrambit. They come from Gurruwama on the mainland of Arnhem Land behind Howard Island. Left, the snake Bundango.*



*(b) The six* marrngit *of Wilindjango of Milijingi clan, Lower Glyde River, and the 'shade'* (malli) *of the* marrngitmirri *himself, lower right. Next to him are Nari, male, and Martung'dung, the female; the bulge is the womb in which she bore the four junior* marrngit *above.*

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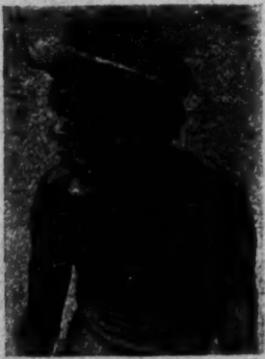
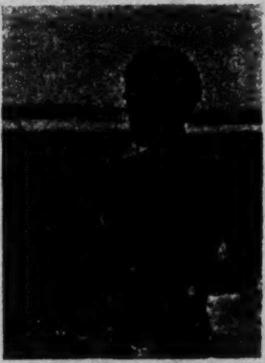


*(c) Wilindjango, whose* marrngit *are shown in (b) above. This man was also a renowned rainmaker of his clan. The basket-like structure on his forehead is* ngamak *(lit. flesh), dried human flesh or* mango *(blood) which are used in the practice of magic and ritual cannibalism. The two small wooden pegs projecting from the basket are* yol *and are made from ironwood* (Erythrophleum laboucherii). *They are part of the stock in-trade of the* marrngit.



*(d) Sorcerer, called* ragalk *or* kalk', *Burara Tribe, Cape Stewart district, north central Arnhem Land, with* kandjurma, *stiletto-like objects sharpened to a fine point and made from ironwood called* maipin. *The* ragalk *are said to insert these* kandjurma *into the hearts of their victims by way of the neck, thence down the dorsal aorta. In this way they claim the* ragalk *draws out the blood of his victim. In Australia these* kandjurma *are popularly known as 'pointing bones.'*

## 'MARRNGIT,' 'MARRNGITMIRRI' AND 'KALKA'

*Photographs (c, d): D. F. Thomson*

[Facing p. 97]

756 magical rites and spells, it does not involve the co-operation
[788] of spirit familiars.

The majority of informants stated that the cult of the *marrngit* is not a hereditary one, and they asserted that although the son of a *marrngitmirri* father may also be *marrngitmirri*, membership of the cult does not necessarily pass from father to son. But at least one informant of
[617] Wanguri clan, a clan of Mindjikai *barpuro*, declared that in his own clan, of which the principal territory is at
[128] Arnhem Bay, a little to the south and east of Elcho Island, the cult of the *marrngit* was hereditary and did pass from father to son. On controversial issues of this kind, long
[124] discussions often took place among the old men who acted as informants, and finally they would reach agreement and give me their verdict. Far from being careless or merely anxious to please, they took great pains to check information by referring to people who possessed specialized knowledge, and took much trouble in settling any doubtful point. My informants declared that the *marrngit* was also hereditary in the Burara tribe, where, however, the cult of the *ragalk* was also established and was certainly dominant.
184 Some conflict, or difference of opinion, does occur in matters of this kind particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land where there is no hard and fast, or orthodox, view, supported by a large body of opinion.

This means that, as might be expected, in the absence of a written language or an organized body to formalize belief, there is necessarily some degree of flexibility, some scope for individual ideas, and within the atypical, intensely segmentary, social organization of eastern Arnhem Land, this variability tends to be emphasized. Even in matters of kinship, which concerns the entire group, since it regulates all behaviour, differences sometimes occurred and the people would call in old men and
[588] submit an intricate or knotty problem to them in the way that I have mentioned above.

121 It was intended originally to confine this paper to a short account of the *marrngitmirri*, translated from the statements
[756 of the medicinemen themselves, and to follow this with
● 776] descriptions of the *marrngit*, which are shown in the accompanying plates of actual drawings of their spirit familiars made by these medicinemen. But my attention has
[114] been drawn to an article by the late Revd. T. T. Webb published some years ago, 'The Making of a Marrngit,'[1] which contains some errors and misconceptions, and I have therefore extended the scope of this article to discuss the relationship of the medicineman and sorcerer in Arnhem Land and the roles and the distribution of these cults.

756 In the opening paragraph of this article Mr. Webb says:
754 'In east Arnhem Land there are two classes of magicians

[p.97(c)]

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152 cannibalism which they regarded as indispensable to a
186 hunter in order to maintain his prowess at a level that
266 could earn for him the coveted title of *tjambait.*

During much of the time—amounting to several years—
123 that I lived in Arnhem Land I hunted with groups of the
status of horde, which often claimed one or more *marrngitmirri*.
I frequently saw these men practising their cult, and
was able to make a detailed study of both *marrngitmirri*
and *kalka* while I lived a nomadic life with these people.

### Kalka *and* Marrngit

754 The cult of the *ragalk* or *kalka—kalk'* of the Burara—, to
which I have referred, is believed to be used to bring about
the death of a man who has been made a scapegoat—
frequently by a rite of augury—for the death of a member
of an enemy horde. Often the victim will be a man against
whom the deceased or his group have harboured a grievance
of long standing, perhaps because he has failed to honour
[688 some payment such as that obligatory to one who has been
689] present at a *ngarra*—or clan totem—ceremony, to make a
ceremonial presentation of *ngata*, food (really vegetable
food), or of *gerri*, goods, valuables, to the elders of this
clan. Of this obligation they say 'to pay back that *marr*'—to
[776 propitiate the *malli* of the culture hero whose totem is in-
782] volved. This *ngata* and the *gerri* presented by men who have
attended the *ngarra* by invitation, are dedicated to the
*wangarr* and are said to be *yarkomirri*, *i.e.* sacramental.
Failure to discharge the obligation to make expiatory
payments of the kind that I have mentioned places a man in
danger of death by magic, even after a long period of time.

761 In Arnhem Land the belief is held that the death of any
754 person in full possession of his social personality is due, not
to what the white man terms 'natural causes' but to the act
of an enemy, often a person who is believed to bear a
grudge, real or imaginary, against the deceased. Even
death from sickness or drowning, from attack by shark or
crocodile, and especially from snake bite, is not regarded
as the primary cause, but merely the agent used by an
enemy, or by a *ragalk* whose aid he has enlisted, to bring
this about. The only exception to the belief about natural
death is extreme old age, when, in the words of one of my
informants, the people say 'time belong him now'—his
time is spent, he has lived his life. Certain types of swellings
[688 and deformities are believed to result from ritual visitation
or punishment by the *wangarr*, the totemic ancestors, for
[776 the violation, even accidental or inadvertent, of a tabu,
[784 particularly on the eating of foods which are prohibited at
certain critical stages in a man or woman's relation to his
753] family or horde, as at initiation, on the death of near kin,
or during pregnancy. Boils of a type distinguished as
*marlung* are believed to be due to ritual punishment and
so held as proof of the violation of a tabu, usually on the
eating of food that is *duyu* (tabu) at critical stages in a man's
life.

753 A man in east Arnhem Land named Nyarrang pointed
776 to a large tumour on his neck and told me that it was due
to the *malli birlma*—*i.e.* a blow from the 'shade' or spirit of
773 an implement called *birlma*—used today as a mallet or
hammer in food-preparation by women, and 'found'

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776 originally by the Djangauwo sisters—women culture
[773] heroes, who, in their progress across east Arnhem Land,
thrust their yam sticks into the ground as they walked.
From each of the holes caused in this way there gushed a
spring of water of a special kind called *milmindjarrk*.
Certain tabus restrict the drinking of *milmindjarrk* water
and my informant Nyarrang declared that the swelling on
his neck was due to ritual punishment in the form of a
blow from the *malli* of the heavy *birlma*, used by the
Djangauwo sisters whose spirits still preside over *milmindjarrk*
waters. Some time later, the effect of the blow from
the *malli birlma* had become manifest in the form of a
swelling. It is characteristic of these people that when
'something is wrong,' when they receive a warning in the
[787] form of an omen or portent, or when 'bad luck' attends
their hunting or fishing expeditions, they look back over
their lives for some incident which has caused them
[152] uneasiness or concern and which they feel may have
incurred the displeasure of the *malli wangarr*, the spirits of
the ancestral culture heroes.

756 The rôle of the *marrngitmirri* is twofold: first, to diagnose
sickness or to determine the cause of death, and secondly
[776] to find a scapegoat by the aid of his *marrngit*—who, being
spirits or ghosts, possess occult powers, powers to see
[787] things not visible to mortals, which they communicate to
the *marrngitmirri*, who in turn passes the information to the
kin of the victim. As a rule the verdict of the *marrngitmirri*
[682 is accepted without question and the people proceed to
593] select an avenger. This will be a person within the kinship
horizon of the deceased—sometimes a younger brother but
often a more distant relation from a clan to which, under
an extension of the kinship structure, he has special
obligations, which may be reciprocal.

In the marginal area adjacent to the Burara, *i.e.* close to
the territorial stronghold of the *ragalk*—the *marrngitmirri*
[754] looks at once for signs of the tell-tale magic of the dreaded
*kalka*, just as a man does when seeking the reason for what
he accepts as ritual punishment.

754 Even in the culturally homogeneous area of north-east
756 Arnhem Land, the beliefs and ideas about the *marrngit* and
114 *marrngitmirri*, as well as about *ragalk*, vary considerably—
necessarily so, in a matter which is strongly subjective. The
foregoing reference to the role of the *marrngitmirri* discounts
Webb's statement (*loc. cit.*) that this man 'possesses no
special influence in the life of his horde or tribe.' It must be
apparent that at critical times, when the sentiments of the
[753 kin of a sick or newly deceased man are aroused as they
761] are by the pronouncements of the *marrngitmirri* (which,
backed by belief in his *marrngit*, are accepted without
question), his influence on the horde in which he lives is
one of life and death.

### *The* Kalka *at Work*

754 The *kalka* or sorcerer is believed to be responsible for
753 bringing about the sickness and ultimate death of his
761 victim but he does not profess to diagnose sickness or
injury due to magic, which is the rôle only of the *marrngit*.
In practice, *kalka* may operate singly but more generally
they work in groups of two or three. A sorcerer is likely

754 unaware of what has happened to him, but they assert that because of their magic he is unable to tell of his experiences when he returns to camp, although he knows that he is doomed, and prepares to die.

After a more or less prolonged treatment to restore the victim and to cover external evidence of his work, particularly in obliterating the tracks to the place where the body lay, the *kalka* wraps leaves—any leaves—around the hook of the spear-thrower and waves it over the prostrate body of his victim, especially over his head. The victim stirs. My informant simulated the groans and grunts of a man awakening from a heavy sleep.

As he recovers consciousness, the victim thinks 'I have slept deeply.' He thinks 'I have slept too much.' Meanwhile the *ragalk* has hidden himself behind a tree.

'I think somebody has killed me,' *i.e.* worked magic. The *kalka* now springs out from behind the tree and frightens his victim, telling him that he is doomed and that he will die. The victim recognizes the *kalka* and threatens to kill him. He hooks his spear on his spear-thrower but he misses again and again. He has lost heart. He returns to camp, intending to tell his kin what has happened so that they can avenge him. The *kalka*, joined now by his confederates, waylays the victim, and again harries and intimidates him. The man returns to camp but is unable to tell what has happened to him. In two or three days he [152] falls sick. He feels cold and lies all the time close to a fire. He is resigned to his fate and calling his kin around him he says, 'I am going to finish' (I am going to die).

756 The people, who jump to conclusions, ready to see the *kalka's* work, call on the *marrngitmirri* who holds him tightly, examining his body. He sees sores—the *malli* of the wounds made by the *kandjurma*—and he sees that the heart blood has been drained. If the *marrngitmirri* is not sure, not ready to accept responsibility for his diagnosis, he will call in others of his cult, or he will wait until [776] evening, when his *marrngit* return to him. These often leave the medicinemen during the day and return to them at night. The *marrngit* sit on his shoulders or in the *matji-tji* [145] (biting bag), a net basket made from strings and filled tightly with down feathers or with down (*ramman*). The *matji-tji* is slung around the neck and hangs down on the chest by a string. It is carried by men during formal ordeals called *makarratta*, and when fighting in single combat, when they put it in their mouths and clamp their teeth on it. *Matji-tji* are often worn by *marrngitmirri* and provide a place of refuge for their *marrngit*. The *marrngitmirri*, after initiation to the cult, is able to see his *marrngit* and talk to them. The people living in the same camp, although unable to see the *marrngit*, claim that they can hear the *kaindjarr*—the sound of swift motion—caused by their wings, or more accurately, since not all use wings as motive power, the sound of motion. The *marrngitmirri* [774 claim to be able to detect the work of *ragalk*, but not to 761] heal their victims, because their heart blood has been drained, the *birimbir* has departed and their internal organs [776 injured or removed.

787] In the years that I lived with the natives in Arnhem Land I frequently saw the *marrngitmirri* at work. He claims

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787 that his *marngit*, being spirits—supernatural beings—have the power to see spirit things. The *marngitmirri* would often approach his patient as he lay on the ground, carrying [755] in his hand a leafy branchlet. From time to time he would sweep the air and the ground, with a forward motion and then step suddenly aside. The purpose of this was twofold—first, because the *malli* of the *ragalk* might be lurking near and would reveal itself in dodging the branch, and secondly to drive his *marngit* inside the body. The *marngitmirri* would then quickly approach the victim and place one hand over the mouth, the other over the anus. The natives explained that, when the medicineman had driven the *marngit* to the sick man or dead body, they would enter by the mouth or anus and walk about inside, making a minute examination of the organs. By preventing the exit of the *marngit* in this way, the *marngitmirri* could make sure that their examination was a thorough one. Later the *marngit* would tell him what they had seen, for he claims that, after being tested and adopted by the *marngit*, unlike the lay members of his group, he is able to talk to the *marngit* and to hear them when they speak to him.

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776 Some of the *marngitmirri* said that their *marngit* remained with them for a long period, often for their whole lives. Sometimes they would be absent for days when they went to look for the honey on which they were believed to subsist, in the caves among rocks which they frequent.

Wiliadjango of Mildjingi, whose *marngit* are shown in Plate 16, said that the *warrakan* (animals)—adding *marngit* [787] *warrakan*—had first come to him when he was alone in the bush. Originally he had only two. They hovered around and then sat one on each of his shoulders, and he declared that they looked like 'small pigeons.' They folded their wings like birds as they sat, but they talked like *yulngo*—humans.

All the *marngitmirri* with whom I lived and to whom I talked about their cult, agreed that their *marngit* had come to them suddenly and unexpectedly. Their accounts all agreed that in the beginning they had been either incapacitated by injuries inflicted by the *marngit* and later restored by them or had been sick and made well again. Some of the *marngitmirri* said that they had been invited by the *marngit* in turn to test their own skill by injuring the *marngit* and trying to restore them. They declared that this procedure, and these visits, had continued for some time—sometimes for weeks—before the *marngit* had finally adopted them.

The medicinemen, in talking of their *marngit*, referred to them as *warrakan* bird (or animal) or *warrakan kulong*, and declared that the *marngit* often addressed the man whom they had adopted by the kinship term *papa* (father). Sometimes the medicineman applied the term *yoto*, child, to his *marngit*.

The accounts given by several *marngitmirri* agree in saying that their *marngit* did not remain with them continuously but that they visited their *marngitmirri* in his camp early in the morning and at evening, sometimes

[p.102(A)]

756 remaining with him all night. None of the medicinemen
776 that I met in east Arnhem Land claimed to have a single *marrngit* only, and the number varied from two to four or five or even more, as in the case of Wilindjango, who had six (Plate J*b*).

[787] The *marrngitmirri*, as he gains experience in the cult, is able to see on the body of a victim of secret killing spear wounds which are not visible to ordinary people.

As the drawings in colour in Plates I and J indicate, there is a considerable variation in the concepts of the *marrngit* entertained by the *marrngitmirri*, but all agreed that these are *wakkinngu*—profane, in the sense of non-sacred, with the special implication that they are not associated with, or dedicated to, the *wangarr*, and so not subject to ritual or supernatural sanctions. The *marrngit* and their cult are regarded, therefore, by the natives of Arnhem Land as apart altogether from totemism. This essential distinction was pointed out to me by my informants themselves. They emphasized it frequently by referring to their *marrngit* as *warrakan*—animals—a term that they never used for their totems, except in reference to the actual animal form which the totems sometimes assumed in ancestral times—for, being *wangarr*, they had supernatural powers and were not subject to the restrictions and limitations of ordinary men. They were *wangarr*, hence supernatural.

The people always described their totems as *malli wangarr*—the spirits or shades of the ancestral culture heroes—and therefore, *yarkomirri*, literally with, or having, a name, dedicated ceremonially to the *wangarr*. On
782 ceremonial occasions the obligatory presentations of *ngata* (food) are dedicated to the *wangarr* concerned by the *dalkarramirri*, who acts in the role of high priest. And
774 because of their association with the *wangarr*, all totems or totemic objects are subject to supernatural sanctions and are still watched over by the *malli* of these *wangarr* who guard jealously the observance of the rituals associated with the heritage that they left behind.

771 The demarcation between what is sacred and what is profane, between *yarkomirri* and *wakkinngu*, emphasizes the recognition by these people of the essential distinction between *marrngit* and totem, between religion and magic.

*Notes*

114 [1] The data presented in the paper were obtained when I was under commission by the Commonwealth Government in Arnhem Land, prior to the war, and during the war while O.C. Northern Territory Coastal Patrol and the Special Reconnaissance Unit, Norforce.

113 [2] *Oceania*, Vol. I, 1936, pp. 336–41.

[3] See Donald F. Thomson, 'Two Painted Skulls from Arnhem Land, with Notes on the Totemic Significance of the Designs.' MAN, 1939, 1.

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826 [4] *Tortork* is heart in the strictly anatomical sense, but some of my informants declared that it was also the seat of the *malli*, or shade, a kind of non-material or spiritual manifestation, which has nothing to do with the shadow.

[p. 102(B)]

vital organs, and it made off into the scrub. He followed the 752
wounded animal, and in the ensuing scuffle was himself 262
seriously wounded, and had his thigh laid open by the pro- 224
truding spearhead. However, he killed the animal and
cooked some of it to take back to camp, and propped the
rest in the branches of a tree. When he came limping into
camp, his friends saw the blood and asked what had hap-
pened. Some of them went off to get the meat, but his
closest relatives said with characteristic and genuine feeling:
'We will not eat that meat; it has Marjirry's blood on it.'
It was clearly a case of 'mumbakuta' and the spilt blood had [826]
to be ceremonially washed away and his body purified by
washing in a totemic well. Marjirry's father began the [783]
ceremony by declaring: 'No one is to eat that meat except
my son's wife and children; it is mumbakuta.' He scooped
a hole in the sand resembling his horde's totemic well, and
when the rest of the kangaroo arrived, the closest relatives
ate it, carefully buried the bones and skin in the 'well', and
lit a fire over it so that the camp-dingoes could not desecrate
them.

By the end of the next week Marjirry felt better, so his
father told him that he must 'wash' and that he would make [783]
him 'koota-koota', or ceremonially clean, in their totemic
well. Everyone sat by the 'well' containing the buried bones
and skin. After some singing and dancing, Marjirry stood
over the well whilst the leader 'sang' the horde's thanks to [776]
the spirit-Ancestors for restoring him to health. Sand was
poured over him, and he washed imaginary blood off his
body and smeared himself with red ochre. However, before [783]
the affair could be considered finished with, Marjirry again
went hunting and brought his first kill to his father, who
announced that everyone could eat it, and in the ensuing
meal thanked them for having observed the tabu. To break
this tabu and eat the victim's food, or use his utensils, is a [753]
breach of etiquette and a violation of sacred and personal

821 the clouds together and pushing the wind before them in the
825 way that water spreads out before a rolling stone. As he
789 labours the snake weeps copiously and his tears fall as rain.
If a snake is not available for rain-making, a bundle of grass
may be tied together and submerged in a waterhole. Instructions
are sung to this before its immersion, whereupon
[776] the great Spirit who made the world and at times revealed
himself through the mythical serpent, assumes the functions
of the missing earthly reptile and sends the rain.

In west Arnhem Land another mythological serpent
[184] sends rain in response to aboriginal wizardry. He shows
himself as the rainbow, and thunder is the rumbling of his
body as he turns over to urinate in the form of rain. To impress
his admirers with his strength, Umbij hits two stones
together till they flash fiery lightning.

821 If an old man is offended at some slight in the wet season
789 he will threaten to send a storm. All day Munju had been
888 mumbling and scowling at the door of his shelter, but his
temper improved considerably toward sundown as nimbus
clouds gathered to the accompaniment of distant thunder.
That night a fierce tropical storm swept over the island, trees
were struck by lightning, thunder crashed, and the wind
howled as it levelled trees and shelters. In the sparkling
stillness of the following dawn, the sun rose over a subdued
camp, where Munju's honour had been vindicated, and he
accepted the homage of his contemporaries. Also in the
stormy wet season I heard a noisy termagant at Yirrkala
[302] objecting to young women cutting their hair, and when they
[578] persisted she threatened to call up a storm. That night we
had heavy rain and a strong wind, and next day old Bamaja's
exploit was referred to in subdued tones. Like most rainmakers
she was aged, and having lived in the open air for
sixty years with no other shelter than a sheet of bark, she
knew her weather and could make a fairly accurate forecast.

## BLACK MAGIC

There are no direct methods for stopping a storm, and it 123
is taken for granted that the rain continues as long as the 789
rain-maker wills it. If fine weather is desired it is necessary 821
to intimidate the rain-maker. During protracted stormy weather I developed acute appendicitis, and as the wireless transmitter had been shattered by lightning, we were unable to get medical assistance till five Yulengor, including Mau, volunteered to make a hazardous open-sea trip to the nearest pedal-wireless station one hundred and fifty miles away. Day after day the storms and high seas continued and the canoe was hardly expected to get through. From the time the boys left till the flying doctor arrived, Jirring, who was particularly attached to me, sat by his camp-fire significantly grinding his axe and muttering threats against the misguided rain-maker who had not only manufactured the storms, but now obstinately allowed them to continue.

Another kind of magic belongs to certain localities and 754
it is necessary to perform certain rites at these magic-centres. [778]
An old gnarled tree in the Wessel Islands shelters the spirits [776]
of octopuses, and peculiar rock formations near Cotton Island are also octopus-spirit centres. If a nomad wishes to harm another he visits either site and instructs a spirit-octopus to enter the victim's body, in an invisible form, or to change into a fish which the victim will catch and eat to his destruction. Two men from Arnhem Bay were killed in the course of a long feud, so their mother went to an octopus centre and sent a spirit to spoil her enemies. She told the octopus-spirit to travel into enemy territory and there change into a large shell-back turtle, to float near the shore, and to remain inactive till caught and eaten: 'And when they eat you, you kill them,' she said. About that time the unfortunate enemy chanced to harpoon an outsize turtle near Port Bradshaw, and ate all they could, without paying attention to the poison glands. Within a few hours

754 several women and children were dead; other sufferers were retching, and rolling on the beach in agony.

When an epidemic of whooping cough from Darwin swept
[164] eastwards through Arnhem Land and caused many deaths, a horde on the Crocodile Islands explained that an enemy
[776] had released the curse from a tree containing the spirit of the common cough. By stripping the bark from the tree he uncovered the evil spirit and sent it to the camps of his enemies to afflict them. On the other hand he could have broken up the tree, burnt it, and sent the smoke to blow over them.

754 Old Manimba, lame and half-blind, was familiar with
753 magical arts and an acknowledged rain-maker. He also
789 claimed to have control over mosquitoes and boils. Spirits
885 of both plagues inhabit the pandanus palm, and when these
[776] prickly fronds drop off in the wet season the mosquito and boil spirits are released to swarm over the land. Manimba usually gets what he wants by threatening to send some sort of plague. To rouse unseasonal mosquitoes he pulls a green pandanus frond and instructs its mosquito-spirit to swarm into the country of his enemies, and it is done. He can call up boils by making a fire under the palm and directing the smoke to blow over and inflict certain camps.

754 Death in any but the very young or old is attributed to evil
761 magic and the first consideration is to fix the blame, for
787 someone must die for it. When a man is killed his lesser
[775] spirit follows the killer. Marrngeit, or benevolent witch-
[756] doctors, claim to be able to see these enslaved ghosts, and they are called on for an opinion. They sometimes make startling revelations to the relatives, though not always without serving their own ends. I remember one marrngeit acted on his own initiative, and asked the relatives: 'Do you know why your brother died?' And when interest and suspicion were fully aroused, he continued, 'I have seen his "mali". It is following Jimunbol, and he must

551 the distinction, and when I forgot the new name and used the old one she remained naïvely silent till correctly addressed.

775 Appropriate names are given to wandering ghosts, though 'mali', 'morquoi' and 'warru' are the most comon. Mali [192] and morquoi are also used for reflections in water or in a mirror, and warru is applied to any shade or shadow. Ghosts roam at will, hunting and fishing, gathering yams and cooking them; strange events, unaccountable fires, a falling tree, and unrecognizable footprints can all be attributed to mali. At times a mali deserts a skeleton and hovers round a mother's camp, and should she find that her food has disappeared, she is happy in the belief that her dead child's shadow came to her when hungry.

'Birrimbirr' is the second spirit found in every individual. [774] Birrimbirr come from the spirit world of Buralkor, and at death relatives urge them to return there. Irrespective of the life lived on earth, birrimbirr return to Buralkor, and good and bad spirits live there in hordes as they do on earth.

[776] [821] Buralkor lies beyond the rising sun and is the home of the Great Spirit who sent out the first creative Ancestresses. The sun comes from the spirit land and goes back again each night to suckle her infant. On its flight to Buralkor a spirit first sees a cloud rising from the sea and later it resolves itself into a dense jungle with every leaf holding a sparkling dewdrop. On approaching the trees, the birrimbirr finds an opening, and a plover guides it through the branches to the camp of its horde's spirits, where it is welcomed and it settles down to a happy life of hunting. Birrimbirr are able to see what is taking place on earth, and from time to time they hear earthly relatives calling for help and for them to go and pilot in another spirit.

765 With both mali and birrimbirr safely disposed of, the bones are smeared with red-ochre, and involved totemic symbols

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# *Creation Myths—Out of the Dawn*

*773 [771] As with most primitive people, the story of Creation is of the utmost importance to the aboriginal. Everything he says and does, from the songs he sings to the way he catches and cooks his food, is determined by the way it was done by his mythical creators. A striking similarity links aboriginal creation stories with the myths of all primitive peoples, even to the inclusion of a supernatural serpent. One Arnhem Land snake went so far as to eat two of the ancestral agents; today he is the most important living link with the spirit world. His voice is thunder, and lightning flashes from his tongue. [821]

Legends in east Arnhem Land say that these mythical Ancestors came from 'over the sea' and 'beyond the dawn'; hordes in the west believe that their creative agents came from beyond the sunset.

● 776 *773 Junkgowa, or creative Ancestresses, came from the spirit-world of Buralkor. Wangarr is the Great Spirit of Buralkor, and though vague and indefinite in form and purpose, he long ago expressed himself through semi-human Junkgowa-agents, and continues to reveal himself in any unusual happening, such as an eclipse, an earth tremor, or a cyclone. [821] Junkgowa created important food-producing areas, unusual rock formations, peculiar water-holes and springs, which are links with the spirit-world. [778]

Stories of creation vary greatly, for in east Arnhem Land the Junkgowa travelled some three hundred miles up and down amongst a group of three dozen hordes, and now each horde jealously preserves a detailed account of what [184]

took place in its own particular territory. Yet the essentials 776●
of the story agree to an astonishing extent, considering 773*
that there is no written language and that details must 184
be passed on orally or in ochre-painted pictures. By far the biggest variation concerns the Junkgowa's sex, for in the east, where they landed, it is said that they were male and female, but half-way across the social group it is maintained that they were sisters.

Before leaving the spirit-world the Junkgowa created the 773*
sea so that they could travel in their long-nosed canoe, 533
which was paddled in much the same way as their human descendants learnt to paddle theirs, and they made light of their toil by improvising songs. First they sang about their paddles, and this 'paddle song' is preserved as a chorus in an important ceremony recording Junkgowa songs and tales of their deeds. Waves rose for the first time, so they sang about them, and also about turtle, dugong, sharks, deep sea fish, and a porpoise that guided them on their way. A sea-gull that followed the canoe, and at times rested on it, is also immortalized in song.

But singing alone could not do away with their toil and 773*
fatigue, and the Junkgowa became so hot that they called up 821
the cool south-east monsoon, which rose in the spirit-land, and has blown steadily for at least five months in every succeeding year. With the breeze behind them they hoisted a sail, and after several nights and days they made a landfall. Near the shore the sea was too rough for safe landing, so the Junkgowa stopped the wind and thereby introduced the calm that now follows the south-east monsoon and precedes
the north-west monsoon. Presumably they did not allow for 773*
a treacherous 'ninth' wave that over-turned the canoe, and 778
this incident is authenticated by a long black rock that rose out of the waves to mark the scene of the accident and to enshrine the lesser-spirit of the canoe. Yulengor point out the rock to their sons to this day.

*773 power of the men's ceremonial singing and dancing, and
779 after the manner of women they were compelled to block
their ears, to hide their faces and to run from the place.
With unholy glee my informants recounted the rout of the
Junkgowa Women, and added that they consoled themselves
by saying: 'No matter, let the men keep the totems.' And
men have guarded them ever since.

*773 Having outstayed their usefulness at Yaure-Yaurngor,
●776 the Ancestresses were relieved to hear the beating of distant
clap-sticks, and traced them to Elcho Island. They came to
the western end of Cadell Strait, and seeing plenty of fish
they tried to catch them, but only succeeded in injuring
their hands. Until this time their hands were webbed and
without fingers, but as they chased the fish and repeatedly
struck their hands on the rocks the skin was broken and
fingers were formed.

*773 Elcho Island is an important totem centre in Arnhem
779 Land, where self-created totems were in existence before
[778] the Junkgowa arrived. One of the peculiarly shaped totem-rocks embodies the mali of the 'shout' in the great Ngara
ceremony. Others contain the mali of yam sticks, crabs,
and palm mats. As these totems were being evolved they
were attacked by swarms of sandflies and forced to retreat
along the beach, till finally they wriggled into the sand for
protection, and now only small parts of them project above
the surface.

The Ancestresses made a long sand-bar totem, that they
might cross to the island and endow it with the mali of their
[778] clap-sticks. On a nearby reef they dropped two large rocks
to enshrine their own lesser-spirits. Another sun-totem was
[789] made on the beach, and like the one near Arnhem Bay it is
[821] beaten after heavy rain. In support of the custom, one of
my guides remarked: 'Yes, Ngulprei's mother beat it last
wet season to make the ground dry so she could go for yams
*773 at the other end of the island.' By the side of the sun-totem

the Junkgowa met the Men with the clap-sticks and learned 773* that they had come from Murungga Island, one of the Crocodile Islands. Like old Men previously encountered, these also claimed to be self-created Junkgowa from the Murrnggin clan; they had crossed over to Elcho Island to prevent the female Junkgowa coming to the coast. This temporary restraint was soon overcome, and the Men called the Women 'gutara' or brothers' or sisters' grandchildren, and the Women reciprocated with 'mari' or grandparents' brothers.

On the first night, the Men brought out their clap-sticks, 773* and like modern nomads they entertained their visitors with 533 horde songs. But their timing was so fast, that the visitors [574] were shocked, and said they would teach them a new song; thereupon they introduced them to the celebrated Ngara ceremony. After it was all over the Men conceded that they had a lot to learn about singing: 'We may be better at food-gathering, but you Women are our superiors in singing and totemic lore. We would like to sing your way.' Thus the old Murrnggin songs lapsed and the Junkgowa ceremonies were established.

Many songs were sung through the night, and as the Men 773* began to sing them, a subterranean being, 'Bunar-ka' [776] (literally a roll of paper-bark), rose out of the sand and thumped the ground in unison. Bunar-ka is totemically linked with the rite of circumcision, and the Junkgowa made [881] the most of the occasion by taking two Murrnggin boys and initiating them beside the sun-stone. Designs were painted on the boys, and they were loaded with belts, armlets, and other brightly coloured decorations still used in circumcision ceremonies. They sang and danced the usual preliminaries, and then chipped a sharp flake from the sun-stone with which to perform the operation. As it neared completion, the youths sank into the sand, and later came up some distance offshore, leaving an outcrop of rock to

CHAPTER NINETEEN

# Stone Age Religion

IT IS OFTEN asked if aboriginals are religious and if there is 771
an aboriginal religion. That 'man is a religious animal' and that he is 'incurably religious' are theories that have been widely accepted. Nevertheless it is surprising to discover the extent of aboriginal religious beliefs. Their beliefs are primitive, yet they include the early forms of most well-known religions, and cover to an astonishing degree much of the content in fundamental religion. Religion may be defined in many terms, but a score or more of these widely varying definitions cover the indefinite scope of aboriginal beliefs. Aboriginal religion is one of 'beginnings', and the sum total of his beliefs resolves itself into a deep well of proto-religion in which is found fetishism, tabu, magic, awe, fear, totemism, and prayer to departed human spirits.

Fetishism includes the belief that supernatural powers 778
may be harnessed by wearing a charm of hair, skin, blood, 765
or bone taken from the body of a dead man.[1] Wandering 776
spirits are feared, the world is full of them and unexplained
happenings are attributed to them.[2]

Tabus are carefully observed and ceremonial abstinence 784
is dependent on the fear of definite consequences[3] whilst,
because of its negative reaction, Stone Age men refrain from
doing certain things for fear of the evil that will come upon [262]
them, as when women abstain from eating men's food and [841]
from hunting their game during menstruation.[4]

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[1] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Chapter 6, 'From Hand to Mouth.'

[4] Chapter 5, 'Jungle Lore and Etiquette.'

## YULENGOR

789 Magic profoundly influences everyday beliefs and habits, and an ordinary nomad, as well as the witch-doctor, may set in operation magical powers.[1]

776 Prayer is offered to the spirits of the dead, and they are
782 not only called on to receive departing human spirits, but
[775 in time of sickness, a man will call on the waterspout to carry
his prayer to the spirits of his relatives.[2] A patient may also
755] enter a totemic waterhole inhabited by a great mythical
snake, which will effect the faith-cure.[3] Mythical serpents
are called on for help, and receive prayers in time of acute
danger and distress.

782
771 Makarola told me that he had been overtaken by darkness when returning with his family after a day's fishing. A strong wind arose and the canoe was blown out to sea, waves half-filled it, and whilst wives and children baled frantically in the darkness, he toiled to keep the dug-out into the wind. Makarola then remembered his totem and called on it for help. He said that in that instant he saw a 'bright light' which 'filled' his head. By the light he was assured that they would be brought safely to land, and when the wind abated, the family landed in an exhausted condition.

779 Though awe and fear weigh heavily in aboriginal religion,
the nomad's religious outlook and practices are best summed
up under the term 'Totemism'. Such totemism links man
and nature and goes back to the ancestral creators of
Junkgowa, who made the earth and its inhabitants, in-
stituted present-day laws, habits and customs, and defined
for all time the nomad's outlook and beliefs. Totemic
beliefs and the record of their bestowal are preserved in the
[796] Ngara ceremonies, which are linked with the totem centres
where the hero-Ancestors performed their mighty deeds.
775 Behind the supernatural Ancestors, and beyond the present
world, is the spirit-land of Buralkor, from whence they came.

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[1] Chapter 13, 'Black Magic.'

[2] Chapter 10, 'Medicine-Men and Magic.'

[3] Ibid.

Buralkor is also inhabited by the sun and her child, and by 775
departed human spirits and Wangarr.

Wangarr is the eternal, indefinite, impersonal power 776
behind creation and all life. He is impersonal, yet benign.
He sent the Junkgowa to the earth, and through their
totem centres he is now in touch with men. Being impersonal,
there is no suggestion of his being placated, and
eventually both the evil and the good go to Buralkor to dwell [775]
with him in the spirit-land.

Unusual happenings are glibly attributed to Wangarr, and 779
his name is constantly on the lips of nomads. To Maulin and
his horde, the entire headland and the islands off Port
Bradshaw had always been a totem centre, for here the
ancestral Junkgowa had performed their miracles; the application
of the vague 'Wangarr' to any part of the area indicates
that it is linked to the spirit-world. Maulin and his
sons visited their totem centre near Port Bradshaw shortly
after a cyclonic disturbance, and on a reef near an island
they saw a new rock that had been thrown up in the storm.
No such simple explanation came to their minds, however,
for Maulin casually remarked, 'Oh, Wangarr,' and his explanation
satisfied everyone. In the course of time a horde
from the south wandered in to fraternize and to bring news
concerning a raid that had taken place below Blue Mud
Bay, in which a woman and her child had been killed.
'Yes,' Maulin nonchalantly remarked, 'we knew something
untoward had happened, because we saw a new rock standing
on the reef and realized that Wangarr had something to
do with it. It must have been put there by the spirits of the [775]
woman and her child to show us that they had been killed.'

It is impossible to determine just where lies the line of 776
demarcation between Wangarr and the activities of de- 775
parted human spirits. Nor is it necessary to make such
distinction, for the term Wangarr includes them all, the
Great Spirit, creative Junkgowa sent forth by him, the

776 power behind totem centres, and human spirits created and
775 received again in Buralkor by him after death.

It soon becomes obvious that to arrive at an understanding
771 of the nomad, and to win his complete confidence, there
773 must be an appreciation of his religion. His religion runs down through his secret life to everyday arts and crafts, which were all given him by the Junkgowa and determines even his methods of food-gathering and cooking. All these things are done in a particular manner, because the Junkgowa so instituted them. In the network of the nomad's life the simplest of activities are linked to his highest beliefs and noblest aspirations. They stand or fall together, and no part of his habits and customs can be tampered with without the risk of doing violence to the entire structure of his life and culture. An effective approach to the nomad can be made only on the basis of religion; that is, by an appreciation of his habits, outlook, and philosophy of life. Be a man trader, adventurer, or missionary, he will find a ready welcome if he is prepared to respect their laws, both common and sacred, which are all interwoven and rest on ancient Junkgowa creation myths.

Several old men were talking together and invited me to
177 join them. One of them said: 'We like those stories of Jesus
797 that you tell us: He is the white man's Junkgowa. Our Junkgowa came from Wangarr and we can see now that, in the same way, Jesus is the white man's Junkgowa.' It was instantly clear that they accepted Jesus as the equal of their Junkgowa—and no more. If such an estimate were accepted it would preclude any development in their outlook, aspiration, and custom. I suggested to these primitive philosophers that many Junkgowa had taught the white man, although they went by the name of 'prophets'. Second, their teachings were incomplete and vague till God the Eternal Spirit, known to aborigines as Wangarr, sent His Son Jesus to complete the revelation. Because of the